

Driver used rally skill to kill couple

By Ian Burrell

A MOTORIST who boasted to police that he was "the best driver ever" killed a young couple instantly by shunting their car out of his way and into the path of an oncoming vehicle on a dual carriageway, a court was told yesterday.

Jason Humble, an amateur rally driver for 15 years, failed to stop his powerful former police car, a Vauxhall Senator, after the accident, even though it must have been obvious something serious had happened, the Old Bailey was told.

The crash that killed Toby Exley, 22, and his girlfriend, Karen Martin, 20, at Hamworth, west London, last October prompted major police hunt for the following car and press speculation that the accident was the work of a hitman, or was drug-related, David Perry, for the prosecution, told the jury: "But the truth was it was pointless and random and not connected with drug dealing or hit men."

He said that Mr Humble's car was seen by a motorcyclist to strike the couple's black Ford Fiesta three times in the rear. "Toby Exley and Karen Martin died because the defendant became impatient with them. He used his skill as a driver – if skill it was – to nudge their car out of the way."

Mr Humble, 33, unemployed, of Farnborough, Hampshire, denies manslaughter. He also pleads not guilty to causing death by dangerous driving.

The motorcyclist, Brian Gill, 40, a teacher of north London, said that the Fiesta was pushed. "There was a screaming noise from the tyres and a lot of smoke came out. It went off."

The case continues.

sideways," he told the court. According to the prosecution, the Fiesta turned almost 90 degrees across the central reservation barrier, into the path of another driver.

"It was more of a push than a bump. Mr Gill heard the squeal of tyres. He saw the defendant's car pull back and drive up again, making contact a second time," Mr Perry said. "Then it pulled back before accelerating forward again, striking it in the rear."

The identity of the other car and its driver remained a mystery for more than two weeks, Mr Perry said. When Mr Humble was eventually arrested 17 days later, he admitted that he had been the driver but denied deliberately using his car to force the other car on to the oncoming carriageway. "He said there was a minute possibility the vehicles had touched but he had not been responsible for causing Mr Exley to lose control."

Asked whether he was driving dangerously, Mr Humble allegedly told police: "Absolutely not. I think I am the best driver ever."

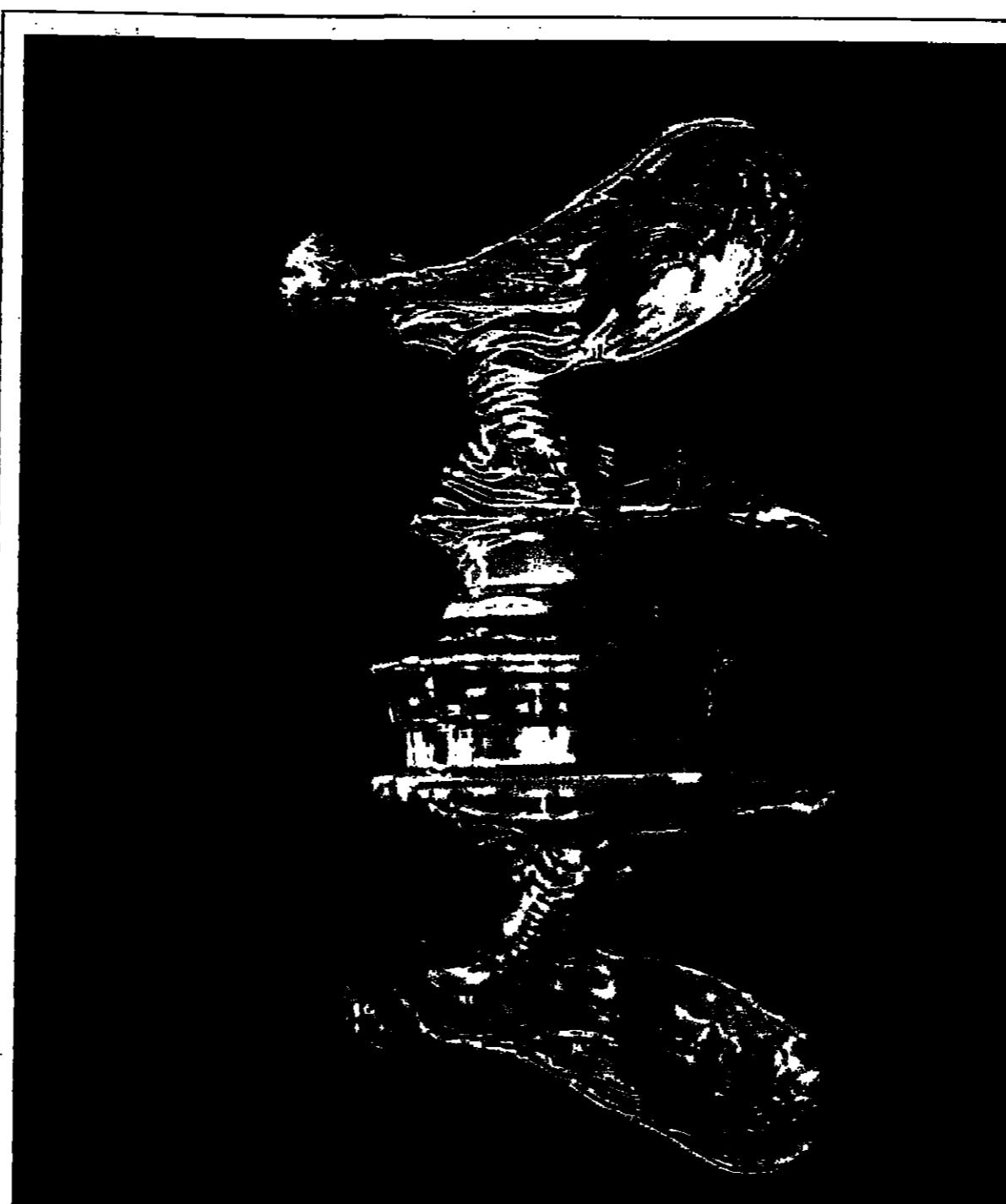
He told police that Mr Exley had cut him up on a roundabout and was driving like "a prat". He said he sat behind him for a while and flashed him once or twice.

The Fiesta braked, forcing him to brake. Mr Humble allegedly said he thought Mr Exley was deliberately blocking him and was "pissed off". He had not stayed at the scene, not report it because he was fearful.

Tests on Mr Exley after the crash showed traces of a product of cocaine in his urine and traces of alcohol in his blood.

"But a blood-alcohol test was negative," the court was told.

The case continues.



Riding high: The Spirit of Ecstasy, designed by Charles Sykes and first used by Rolls-Royce in 1911, on a 1954 Silver Dawn at Rolls-Royce service provider P&A Wood of Great Easton, Essex

Photograph: Brian Harris

End of an era as Spirit of Ecstasy finds a foreign owner

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

WHAT'S in a name? In the case of Rolls-Royce, the answer is at least £190m. Yesterday's sale of Britain's premier car marque to BMW saw the nation's last serious car maker pass into foreign hands.

Valued by Vickers - its present owners - at £150m, BMW bought Crewe's "Spirit of Ecstasy" for £340m. Notable owners have included the Queen, Mao Tse-tung, John Lennon, Charlie Chaplin and Noel Gallagher.

BMW, which already owns Rover and Land Rover and the Mini and the MG marques, has long hankered after the silvery presence of Rolls-Royce. It beat off a number of other bidders, including Volkswagen. Such was the glamour of owning Rolls-Royce that many deep-pocketed tycoons, said to include Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone and Mohamed Al Fayed, took out their calculators to see if they could afford it.

But none could match BMW's financial clout. At the Geneva Motor Show earlier this year Bernd Pischetsrieder, the chairman, promised to pump £1bn into two new model lines in the next decade if BMW took over.

Industry experts say the first to emerge could be a baby Bentley based on the prototype Java, showcased in 1994. It was a marked departure from Rolls's image of the stuffy British style. The four-seater coupé came with a clip-on roof but what it lacked on top it made up for under the bonnet. Its 3.5-litre engine was designed to catapult the car to 60mph in five seconds and the Java could comfortably cruise at 170mph.

Rolls-Royce, founded by the

IN THE NEWS

ROLLS-ROYCE

engineer Henry Royce and the Hon Charles Stewart Rolls, has come a long way since the first "Royce" trundled out in 1904. Two years later came "the best car in the world" - the Silver Ghost - and the Rolls-Royce that the rich know was born.

Last month the latest model - the Silver Seraph - was unveiled and modestly described as "the dawn of a new era".

Rolls-Royce remains indisputably British - its production line will stay at Crewe. But there can be little doubt that Germany's gain is Britain's loss. BMW hopes to match British engineering brilliance with Germanic business sense. Mr Pischetsrieder said it could make 30 per cent savings and aimed to treble sales to 6,000 a year.

For those on the shopfloor, the rising tide of globalisation was welcomed. Rolls-Royce's chief executive, Graham Morris, said the company was looking forward to the millennium. "Everybody recognises this is a global economy. In some ways it's sad we've moved out of British hands, but there was no real British alternative."

Others were less sanguine. "The rape of British industry by BMW is systematically going ahead. People say we live in a global village. Every village has a chief and its poor man. Is Britain heading towards becoming the poor man of the global village?" said Donald Longmore, secretary of the Rolls-Royce Acquisition Consortium, a group of fans which tried to buy the business.

Business, page 19

Leading film directors join forces in battle over fees

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

THE film directors Alan Parker, Mike Leigh, Neil Jordan and Stanley Kubrick have joined forces with directors of television programmes such as *Cracker* and *Heartbeat* to demand repeat fees for their films.

The Directors' Rights Campaign has signed up the top 1,000 makers of films and television programmes in the United Kingdom to demand that their fees take account of repeats, video releases, overseas sales and sales of their programmes to satellite and cable channels.

At the moment, actors and writers are paid a fee for their original work on a programme, but also have contracts that give them extra money if a programme is sold on or shown over and over again. Now, with the boom in television channels, directors are demanding the same treatment. They also want contracts that give them extra fees when a film does well or is released on video.



Director Alan Parker: "It is time we made a stand"

Mr Parker, director of *Angel Heart* and *The Commitments*, and current president of the British Film Institute, is a leading member of the campaign.

"As new technologies allow our film and television work to be shown more and more ways around the world, we are crazy not to insist on benefiting from the considerable and continued exploitation of our work. The UK is totally backward and out of step in recognising our rights,

and it is time we made a collective stand."

The directors' campaign comes as more and more of the creative talent in British television demands a bigger share of the rewards from the industry.

The independent producers' alliance, Pact, is campaigning for broadcasters such as the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 to give producers ownership of the programmes they make so they can make money from overseas or repeat sales.

Actors are also in a battle with advertising agencies to keep their repeat fees for appearing in television campaigns that are shown repeatedly.

Herbert Wise, director of the

Seventies adaptation of Robert

Graves' classic *I, Claudius*, has

joined the campaign because the

programme has been sold

overseas so many times that it

he had made the series in the

United States, where directors

get a share of the proceeds, he

would have been able to retire

on the money. "All directors are

losing out by this shoddy treat-

ment, which is simply not acceptable," he says. "As the number of channels increases, it is essential that we receive proper rewards for what we do."

The Directors' Rights Cam-

paign plans to lobby next week's

Audio-Visual Summit in Bir-

mingham when heads of the film

and television industries will

meet under the aegis of the

British Presidency of the

European Union. The campaign

also plans to lobby the EU and

parliament to force broadcast-

ers to take account of a 1996 EU

directive that gives directors

rights as co-authors.

■ Bechtel, the broadcasting tech-

nical union, is threatening to

disrupt the BBC's summer

sports coverage, including that

of Wimbledon and Ascot, after

conducting a poll of its mem-

bers about plans to hive off the

BBC's programme-making arm

as a subsidiary. Bechtel, which

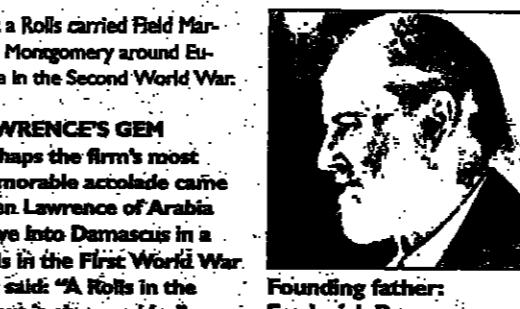
believes the plans will lead to

privatisation, is planning a strike

ballot if the BBC does not give

it guarantees about job securi-

ty and casual working.



Founding father: Frederick Royce

A proud moment for woman boxer

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

JANE COUCH, the women's world welterweight champion, yesterday won her sex discrimination case against Britain's professional boxing authorities.

The decision by an industrial tribunal now means that applications for licences from women should now be treated on the same basis as men's.

Miss Couch said that she expected her application to the British Boxing Board of Control to be processed "within weeks" and that she would be seeking thousands of pounds in compensation for loss of earnings and £20,000 for "hurt feelings".

The fighter, known as "the Fleetwood Assassin", said she had been trying to box profes-

sionally in the United Kingdom for three years but had been denied the right to do so by the authorities. Ms Couch is scheduled to defend her world welterweight championship on 24 May.

Yesterday she acknowledged boxing was a "very dangerous" sport, but there was no reason why she should not be allowed to fight in her own country.

She said the people of her home town, Fleetwood, Lancashire would be proud of her victory. "They are not narrow-minded and neither are my family – they're all right behind me."

She added: "It's bad enough being in the ring without having to fight the authorities. The job itself is very demanding. They made me feel I was off."

The ruling goes that Ms Couch, 29, whose case was

backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, had been "extremely badly treated" by the boxing board. The south London tribunal gave the authorities 42 days to settle the matter.

Sarah Leslie, her solicitor, pointed out that the decision did not mean her client was automatically granted a licence, but her application should now go through the orthodox channels.

In its ruling the tribunal said the evidence that Ms Couch suffered sex discrimination was "incontrovertible". The board had turned down her application on the basis that she would be "emotionally unstable" during periods and more prone to accidents. It was also suggested that women were more susceptible to bruising and therefore to brain damage. It

was also alleged that a woman might box inadvertently during the early stages of pregnancy.

The tribunal pointed out that while the application was rejected on medical grounds, Ms Couch was never examined by a board doctor. There was "overwhelming evidence" that her request for a licence was turned down because she was female. The "medical grounds" on which she was rejected were all "gender-based stereotypes and assumptions".

John Morris, secretary of the BBC, issued a brief statement saying that the decision of the tribunal had been "noted" and there would be no further comment until board members had had a chance to consider its implications with legal and medical advisers.

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And pigs might fly

PANDORA has a modest proposal for Tony Blair. If he wants to put an end to all the carping about his relationship with Rupert Murdoch, he should send Tony Banks, minister for sport, on a fact-finding mission to Spain. Eight months ago, the Spanish parliament passed a law requiring important football matches to be broadcast free on television. Now the Spanish are about to appoint a new sports council that will go beyond just football and decide a wide range of sporting events in the public interest. All those selected will be off-limits to satellite or cable pay TV. Surely if Blair adopted a similar policy here, the enormous gratitude of the British viewing public would eclipse any hostility broadcast by an outraged Murdoch and his media mouthpieces.

Old joke, new danger

FOLLOWING the Prime Minister's speech to the Millennium Bug conference at the Barbican yesterday, John Humphrys of the *Today* programme chaired a panel on the subject. The headstrong radio presenter, who fell foul of the Government for his supposedly rough treatment of Harriet Harman last year, led off with a joke. It told of a new Labour MP who goes to the barber to have his hair cut but refuses to take off the headphones he is wearing. All the barber's entreaties prove useless; the MP insists that "Peter Mandelson says that I must wear these at all times". This makes the barber's job much more difficult and, eventually, he cajoles the MP into taking them off. Within moments, the MP begins to gurgle, choke and then dies. Sometime later, after the politician's body has been carted off for the post-mortem, the barber finds the headphones that have fallen off in the confusion and decides to have a listen. He hears the recorded voice of Mandelson, repeating: "Breathe in... breathe out... breathe in..." Pandora's prediction: John Humphrys won't be chairing many Government-sponsored panel discussions in future.

Tasteless memorabilia

AMERICAN marketing genius – that inspired immorality which turned a cartoon mouse into billions of dollars and cheap hamburgers into an international corporate empire – is bearing down on President Clinton's 3,000

"novelties" on display at this year's National Memorabilia Convention will be a computer game in which players try to direct Monica Lewinsky across Washington and into the Oval Office. Also a talking "Lewinsky" doll that says "I'm a good feminist", "All hail to the queen" and "Whatever you want, Mr President". There are Lewinsky masks for Halloween, Lewinsky birthday cards ("I'll blow out your candles"), Lewinsky wigs, Lewinsky sex toys and even a "Monicondom" that is supposedly designed just for oral

enough of this tit. Pandora can't help thinking that Cecilia Parkinson, David Mellor and Robin Cook are all fortunate they suffered their worst embarrassments on this side of the Atlantic. On the other hand, Pandora fears that Monica Lewinsky's example will provide Fergie with new money-making ideas.

It must be the food

THE Norman Invasion, Part II, is coming to your local post office, bus stop and corner shop. According to *Le Figaro*, there are now 60,000 French citizens seeking their fortunes in the City of London alone. Meanwhile, a French consular official estimates that there are about 180,000 French men and women resident in Le Bretagne Cool. Many in this unprecedented new wave of Gallic immigrants are under 30 years old, with a *Le Figaro* poll showing that, after the United States, Britain is the second most popular emigration destination for a generation severely disillusioned with its own society. Not only is the unemployment rate in Paris twice what it is in London, but we now have dozens of Michelin-starred restaurants on this side of the Channel. Poor de Gaulle must be spinning in his grave.

Comedy of errors

SHAME on the Northern Examining Board, whose further GCSE English practice papers for 1998 contain the flagrant misspelling "pratice" in bold type on their title page. Pandora suggests the examiners consult their Fowler's *Modern English Usage*.

Pandora

"Political" agenda
sparks new wave
of complaints to
industry watchdog,
writes Paul McCann

THE NUMBER of complaints from the public about sex, blasphemy and bad language in advertising fell last year to be replaced by organised lobbying groups who mobilised complaints to counter advertisements by their opponents.

The most complained about advertisement last year was by the Gun Control Network, an organisation campaigning to have 22 handguns banned in the aftermath of the Dunblane tragedy. Its poster advertisement showed a grave and the slogan: "A .22 handgun makes the same size hole as a Magnum". That, and a poster featuring former US attorney general Robert Kennedy, who was shot with a .22, received 94 complaints.

The fourth largest number of complaints was also prompted by an advertisement for the Gun Control Network. This time complaints were lodged about a cinema advertisement narrated by Sean Connery which showed a .22 firing into a human-shaped target. These complaints were also rejected.

It emerged at the time that some complaints were received even before the advertisement was screened as pro-shooting organisations prompted their members to complain.

In its annual report released yesterday, the authority revealed that three of the top 10 most complained about advertisements were generated by or made by special interest groups.

The third most complained about advertisement was by the Vegetarian Society and showed pictures of post-operative cancer scars under the slogan "It's much easier to cut out meat". The campaign had been timed to coincide with the publication of a government report which warned that consumption of too much red meat could increase the likelihood of getting cancer.

It attracted complaints both



Making a point: Lee jeans' image (above) was last year's second most complained about advertisement, surpassed only by the Gun Control Network's campaign (below left) for a ban on handgun ownership. Peugeot's tattoo advertisement (right) attracted criticism of a more traditional kind



THE NEW SPECIAL EDITION PEUGEOT

from the public, the Meat and Livestock Commission and from cancer charities who believed it misleadingly implied that vegetarians did not get cancer. The ASA fast-tracked a judgement on the advertisement in October and banned it.

While large numbers of complaints can indicate the strength of feeling by groups of complainants, they do not necessarily indicate that an advertisement breaks the advertising codes of practice," said an ASA spokesman.

The number of complaints about the portrayal of women fell by 45 per cent last year, but the second most complained about advertisement concerned the portrayal of men. Lee's advertisement for its boot-cut jeans, which showed a woman's

stiletto pressing on a naked male rear, attracted complaints and led to claims that so-called "girl power" was creeping into advertising.

More familiar in nature were the 46 complaints against Peugeot's "tattoo" advert which

featured a tattoo of a Peugeot 106 on a woman's midriff, 36 about a Gossard bra poster where the model's nipples could be seen and 27 against the fashion chain French Connection for its deliberately provocative F.C.U.K. poster campaign.

Social services failed abuse-case children

By Roger Dobson

A COUPLE who sexually abused and tortured their young children, including videoing some of the horrific attacks, had been known to social services for nearly 15 years.

Investigations examined more than 200 extracts from social services records about the family that had been logged between 1981 and 1996, according to an independent inquiry report published yesterday. But the parents were not arrested and jailed until two years ago, after the eldest of their five children told teachers what was happening.

Yesterday's report detailed a catalogue of missed opportunities blamed on management failings, inadequate systems, errors of judgement and errors or omission, and it urges the agencies involved to consider whether they should take disciplinary action. One manager

has already left. "There were many opportunities from 1982 to 1996 when routine child protection work should have protected each child. Until 1996, they escaped any concerted inter-agency activity to protect their children," it says.

"In this case there are professionals who must be asking themselves whether individually or collectively they could have done more to protect the children in this family at a far earlier stage."

Over the years there were reports of burn marks, genital soreness, a broken arm, a black eye, and other injuries, as well as other clues, including anonymous allegations of sexual abuse, a history of domestic violence, a GP's concern about possible child battering, hardcore pornography found by police in a child's bedroom, and complaints from neighbours. All failed to secure the protection the children needed. There were other indicators too. Nine years before his arrest, the father, who is now serving life, was investigated by the police for allegedly sexually abusing his five-year-old niece.

The extent of degrading and abusive treatment of children by the parents revealed in the video films counts among the most serious ever recorded in the UK," says the report by Geoffrey James, a former social services inspector. He added: "Individual agencies should consider whether disciplinary action is necessary in respect of some staff in this case."

He makes nine recommendations, including better inter-agency training and new working definitions of neglect. He also wants agencies to have better liaison with the coroner where cases of sudden death in children are checked against the at-risk register.

DAVID HICKS, one of the defining figures in the world of interior and garden design in Britain since the Second World War, has died, aged 68. Mr Hicks died peacefully at home in Oxfordshire, looking out, according to his death notice on the garden he had fashioned since moving there in the late Seventies.

Hicks, with the late John Fowler, turned interior designing in Britain, once the domain of powerful society women such as Syrie Maugham and Sybil Colefax, into a profession in which a dedicated practitioner worked on projects alongside architects.

Hicks was propelled into the public eye in 1960 when he married Edwina Mountbatten, the younger daughter of Earl Mountbatten of Burma, thus becoming part of the extended world of the Royal

Baronscourt, the seat in Northern Ireland of the Duke of Abercorn, where he adapted a series of rooms of parade into a home for modern life, with a kitchen rounding off the sequence of grand reception rooms.

He also produced interiors for the QE2, a royal yacht for King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and a new library at the Lutyens British Embassy in Washington DC when it was redecorated room by room by British designers. In the Seventies and Eighties Hicks turned increasingly to garden design, publishing books on *Living with Design and Garden Design* in the 1980s.

Hicks's younger daughter, India, has made a name as a model, while his son, Ashley, has gone into the same world as his father, as an architect in private practice in London.

Hicks, defining figure of interior design, dies



Hicks: Part of the extended world of the Royal Family

Family and Sixties café society also inhabited by Princess Margaret and Tony Snowdon.

His first book, *David Hicks on Decoration*, appeared in 1966. The house that the Hickses made for their family at Britwell Salome, with its strong colours, and rich furnishings, was definitive of the style which he also employed at

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Swampy gets £100 drug fine

THE eco-warrior known as Swampy has been fined £100 after admitting possession of magic mushrooms.

The 24-year-old former tunneller ran off when he saw the police but said "it's a fair cop" when he was caught and asked to turn out his pockets.

He gave his parents' address in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, his home address when he appeared before magistrates in Penzance under his real name of Daniel Hooper.

The court heard that on 3 February police had received a complaint of two "travelling men" harassing passers-by for money. As a constable went to speak to them Hooper ran off.

When caught and asked to turn out his pockets he was found with a film canister containing dried psilocybin mushrooms, a class-A hallucinogenic drug in their dried form.



A fair cop: Daniel Hooper, alias Swampy, leaving court with his girlfriend, Jenny, yesterday. Photograph: Sam Morgan-Moore

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Lawrence death suspects seen washing off blood

By Kathy Marks

POLICE investigating the murder of Stephen Lawrence were told that four suspects were seen washing blood off themselves on the night of the stabbing. Stephen's father told a public inquiry yesterday.

Neville Lawrence, 56, said his family heard about the incident from a woman who visited their home in Plumstead, south-east London, a few days later. "She said that there had been people in her house on the night of the murder who had washed blood off themselves," he said. "She gave the names of the Accours, Norris and Knight."

Mr Lawrence said in a statement read out to the inquiry that

he and his wife, Doreen, gave the information to their solicitor, who passed it to police. The inquiry has been told that no arrests were made for two weeks. Charges eventually laid against five men - Neil and Jamie Accourt, David Norris, Gary Dobson and Luke Knight - were dropped before the trial.

In an echo of concerns expressed by his wife last week, Mr Lawrence said he felt that little effort was expended on the investigation. "It was clear to me from the outset that the police had no real interest in catching Stephen's murderers," he said. "For this reason we did not have much confidence in them."

He also criticised the failure of police to communicate with the family. Officers did not speak to them at the hospital on the night of Stephen's murder, he said, and what little information they did have - that he had been attacked in the street - was given to them by a neighbour. "Nobody actually told us what had happened to Stephen," Mr Lawrence said.

The inquiry is examining issues arising from the death of Stephen, who was stabbed at a bus stop in Eltham, a few miles from his home, in April 1993. Mr Lawrence described a visit to Greenwich mortuary to see his son's body. "My feel-

ings at that point were that I was looking at my son lying there and thinking what butchers could have done something like this to a human being."

Like his wife, he voiced deep unhappiness with two police liaison officers assigned to the family. On one occasion, one of them, Constable Linda Holden, made a remark about woolen gloves and a hat that were found among his son's belongings. "It was clear that she was implying that Stephen was a cat burglar," he said.

"I felt that they were not sympathetic. The way they spoke to us made us feel as though they regarded us as a nuisance. I felt as though they resented us wanting to know what was happening with the investigation."

Mr Lawrence said that the family felt threatened after youths were seen hanging around outside their house after the murder. "We were very concerned about our children's safety. It was clear that not only were police not going to protect us, but they didn't believe that we were in any danger."

"We were beginning to feel that the killers of my son had more rights than we had. We heard that the killers were being protected."

The inquiry continues today.

137,000 pupils a year banned from schools

By Denis Levertov
Education editor

CHILDREN'S chances of being temporarily excluded from school vary sharply depending on where they live and which school they attend, according to a survey published today.

Questionnaires were sent to 104 local education authorities and 64 returned their forms. Forty per cent had no record of the number of days that temporary exclusions lasted but the survey suggests that the average may be around four days.

Nearly two-thirds had no idea how many excluded children were in care.

Ian Sparks, the Children's Society's chief executive, said:

"Exclusions carry heavy penalties for us all. The survey reveals a huge range of practice from the very best to the frankly disturbing. Local authorities need basic information about the children they are excluding."

The society says that excluded pupils should remain on the school roll even if they are being educated elsewhere so that schools feel a responsibility to re-integrate them. Schools should get extra money to cope with difficult pupils and there should be a compulsory case conference of parents, teachers and local authority officials before a child is excluded.

DAILY POEM

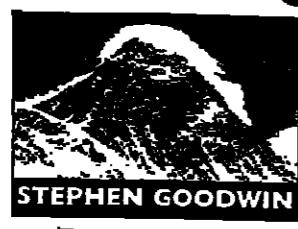
Threat

By Denise Levertov

You can live for years next door to a big pine tree, honored to have so venerable a neighbor, even when it sheds needles all over your flowers or wakes you, dropping big cones onto your deck at still of night. Only when, before dawn one year at the vernal equinox, the wind rises and rises, raising images of cockleshell boats tossed among huge advancing walls of waves, do you become aware that always, under respect, under your faith in the pine tree's beauty, there lies the fear it will crush some day down on your house, on you in your bed, on the fragility of the safe, deadliness you have almost grown used to.

Our poems today and tomorrow come from *Sands of the Well* (Bloodaxe, £8.95), the final volume completed by Denise Levertov, who died last year. Born in Essex in 1923, Denise Levertov moved to the US in 1948, where she published 14 poetry collections and worked as a campaigner for civil rights and against war and nuclear weapons. Bloodaxe also publishes her book of memoirs, *Tesserae*.

It's rough, but even Robert Redford stayed here



Namche Bazaar

IT'S SNOWING steadily. The traders of Namche Bazaar have covered over their displays of Tibetan trinkets, carpets and outdoor gear with plastic sheets and are sheltering in shop doorways.

A child snuggled up to her Sherpani mum calls out "aile" to cagouled passers-by but there are few buyers. The forlorn scene is strongly reminiscent of an English seaside resort on a wet day.

No one on the team of our Himalayan Kingdoms Everest expedition is complaining that today is a rest day, or rather an acclimatisation day. After forays round the muddy alleyways while the sun shone briefly, most of the team has retired to the main room of the Khumbu Lodge to read, write postcards or mull over the weather prospects.

Further up our proposed route near a hamlet called Machhermo, at around 4,000m, an avalanche has blocked the way and is being dug out.

We are not due through there for a few more days and the heavy snow is one more reason not to reach Everest Base Camp too soon.

On the plus side, "Barney" Barnicot, one of our guides, remarks that no one woke up this morning with a headache. I know from experience that if I had rushed up from near sea level to sleep at almost 3,500 metres in the Alps an altitude-induced headache would have been a strong possibility. So our leisurely pace seems to be paying dividends.

Khumbu Lodge is a Himalayan climbing institution. At



Peak practice: The route to Namche Bazaar, beyond which, at an altitude of 4,000m, an avalanche has blocked the way. Photograph: Joan Katchko

the heart of the village, its warm-timbered main room boasts photographs of the patron, Pasang Kima - known to all as PK - with Sir Edmund Hillary, who was first to the top of the world in 1953 along with Sherpa Tensing.

In 1991, the American Himalayan Foundation honoured PK as its Man of the Year for his contribution to the rebuilding of the Buddhist monastery at Thyangboche and the hydro-project which supplies the village with electricity.

Signatures of the filmmaker David Breashears on a poster are evidence of visits between 1983 and last year, and

there is also a picture of Robert Redford, who was here in 1981. You can even stay in the Jimmy Carter Room, who was on

treks over an evil pile. Don't drop your wallet.

Most of the lodge visitors

however are not bound for the who provide the Sherpas of Namche with an income way above that of most Nepalis. "Grant - Hope you had a nice trek without any headaches and your yak was fluffy and friendly, Yak or Yuk!"

While none of us has suffered any physical headaches, I have certainly been dogged by a metaphorical one in trying to communicate this diary to London. The satellite phone Himalayan Kingdoms has promised for Base Camp has not yet caught up with us and beyond Kathmandu a telephone is a rare sight.

Soon after arriving in Namche I was directed to an army post on a hill overlooking the

village as a possible place to make an international call.

The rest of the day was spent in increasing frustration in a small shed where an unilitary-looking Nepali manned a phone in a wooden box.

A Sherpani chattering excitedly for ages into the phone seemed to keep amused most of the group of men, women and children crowded into the hut.

At 6pm the shed was locked and the chance of getting the diary back to London evaporated for another day. Outside chickens scratched around in what may have been the parade ground and it had started to snow.

Thousands of BSE cases 'not reported'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THOUSANDS of cases of mad cow disease have been covered up by farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture, it was claimed yesterday.

Dr Stephen Dealler, a microbiologist at Burnley General Hospital, claims that only one in five cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) - have been reported to the Government by farmers. He will present his evidence to the BSE inquiry tomorrow.

"Since it became mandatory to report all cases in 1988, the number of reports of BSE to the Ministry of Agriculture has declined when statistically the reporting should have been at a high level," he said.

"There has been a gradual drop in reporting, which I can back up, which suggests that farmers have not been honest about the extent of the problem."

Dr Dealler said the under-reporting was certainly going on until 1996, the last year for which figures are available, and "there is no reason to doubt that this covering up is still going on in the farming community".

He suggested that farmers, who were worried about financial ruin, decided to declare clean herds by sending animals for slaughter and rendering at the first sign of BSE.

"That way they would not have to declare they had a BSE problem. Declaring you have BSE leads to a huge financial loss for farmers, which is outweighed by compensation."

Animals sent to the render-

ers are boiled down and turned into powder which is stored at sites around the country. Rendered animals are meant to be BSE-free and the waste material, according to the Government, is safe to store.

But Dr Dealler claimed there could be a health risk if cows with BSE were rendered and their remains stored.

Some of the stores are near water courses and there have been fears that if the rendered powder contained BSE contaminated material it could get into drinking water.

His fears were backed up yesterday by Dr Alan Colchester, a consultant neurologist at Guy's Hospital, London, who said he was concerned about the risks to humans and animals from the rendering process.

Giving evidence to the inquiry, Dr Colchester said inactivity could be encountered in materials associated with rendering and was concerned about Thruxton Mill, a rendering plant near Ashford, Kent which was licensed to receive animals which could have been incubating BSE. There have been four suspected cases of new variant-CJD near Ashford.

"I remain very concerned that the risks to humans and animals from the rendering process and its products have still not been fully evaluated and the precautionary principle is still not being appropriately applied," he said. He was also concerned about the possibility of water-supply contamination as Thruxton Mill lay over an aquifer.



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Taxpayers forked out £2m for defeated MPs

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

THE TAXPAYER forked out more than £1m last year to pay for the office costs of MPs who had already left the Commons.

The payments allowed members who retired or were defeated to walk away with lump sums totalling up to £70,000, on top of pensions of up to £20,000.

The Leader of the Commons, Ann Taylor, has refused to answer an MP's question about the 1992 election, when the payments are believed to have been even higher. Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, is to appeal against the decision under the Code of Conduct on Open Government.

Although last year's election took place on 1 May, one

month into the financial year, retiring MPs were allowed to continue claiming their office costs allowances until the end of June. Those who were defeated were also given two months' extra payment for accommodation in London.

The bonuses came on top of already generous allowances for MPs leaving the Commons. For example, a 64-year-old with

20 years' service who retired last year was entitled to a £15,865 "winding up allowance" and £43,860 for "assistance with the costs of adjusting to non-parliamentary life". In addition, he could claim up to £11,892 for office costs for the three months after the dissolution of Parliament in April: a total of £71,617.

An MP of the same age and

length of service who was defeated received the same winding-up and adjustment allowances, plus up to £2,047 for accommodation during May and June. He received up to £7,928 office costs allowance after 1 May.

If all the MPs had claimed the maximum office costs allowance – and some incomplete figures released by Mrs Taylor

suggest most did – then the total paid after their leaving dates would have been around £2m. It is understood that in 1992, MPs were allowed to claim a full year's office costs allowance even though the election took place on 9 April, nine days into the financial year.

Mr Baker said he was writing to David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of

Lancaster, to appeal for more information to be released. A refusal would lead people to assume everyone was milking the system, he suggested.

"It is in MPs' interests that these questions are fully and frankly answered. The replies which I have been presented with do no good to anybody, least of all to those MPs who were defeated or stood down," he said.

"Ministers should be as open as possible with Parliament, refusing to provide information only when disclosure would not be in the public interest," it said.

Blair's spin doctor labelled control freak

By Fran Abrams

ALASTAIR Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, displayed a "control freak" tendency in the Government when he ticked off two ministers by fax, a senior backbench MP said yesterday.

Mr Campbell is expected to be asked about the incident when he appears before the Commons Public Administration Committee after Easter.

The chairman of the committee, Rhodri Morgan, said the message in the fax was: "There is only one spin doctor round here and that's me..."

"He doesn't want freelance spin doctoring by individual ministers," Mr Morgan said.

In a radio interview, Mr Morgan said the leaked memos to Harriet Harman, the Secretary of State for Social Security, and her deputy Frank Field should perhaps have been worded differently.

In them, Mr Campbell urged the ministers to "enter a period of pre-Budget purdah" and to be careful about lunches with reporters. He also asked why three interviews given by Ms Harman were not cleared through his office.

"Alastair Campbell is a temporary civil servant talking down to ministers and administering a tick-off in this way – unless he had the full authority of the Prime Minister:



Alastair Campbell: 'Nothing surprises or concerns me'

Minister," Mr Morgan said. Asked what the committee would ask Mr Campbell about, Mr Morgan said: "We will be asking the obvious question that everybody will want to know: to what extent should civil servants such as him write letters like this to ministers unless they have the full authority of the Prime Minister?

"And if they do have the full authority of the Prime Minister, wouldn't it be better if the memo actually states it?"

He added: "There is obviously a control freak tendency in the new Labour government, but on the other hand, how can a bunch of control freaks, if that's what you think they are, have devolved power to Wales and Scotland and shortly to London?"

After the revelation ap-

peared in newspapers on Sunday Mr Field said that he had been "told off" by Mr Campbell.

He had felt it necessary to take the matter seriously as it had been raised by such a senior person, he said, though he had considered returning the memo with its English corrected.

Mr Campbell appeared unmoved by the publicity yesterday. Asked if he was surprised to find that two of his memos had found their way into the press, he replied: "Nothing surprises or concerns me."

Or at least, nothing ever surprises me."

Saving face: John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, is asked about whether London should have a mayor.

Photo: PA

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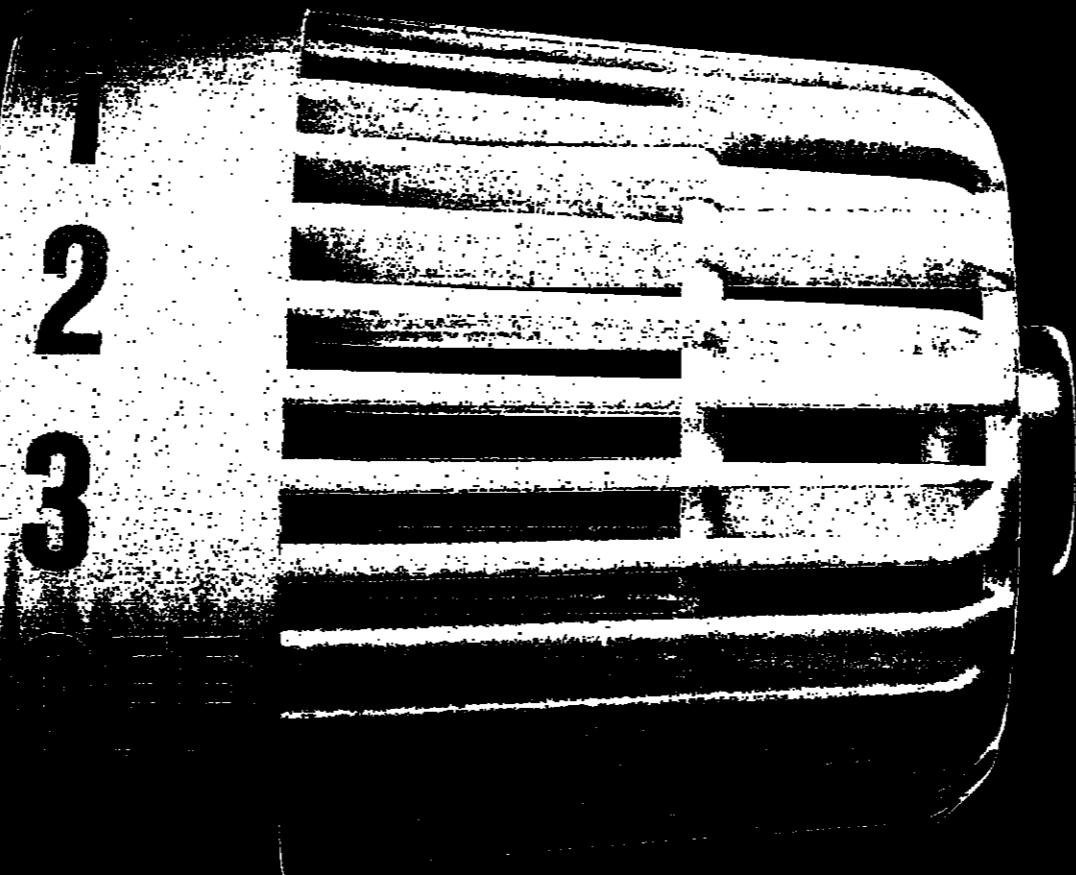
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Confident Saddam takes to the road

By Patrick Cockburn

HE IS back in business and looking confident. On Saturday, Saddam Hussein, the Iraq leader who for seven years almost never appeared in public, visited two villages in the centre of the country. Muffled in a heavy coat, he regaled them with tales of his escape as a 21-year-old after he had tried to assassinate General Abdul-Karim Qassem, a former Iraqi president, in 1959.

"It was like you see in the films, but worse," he told the people of Albu Dor, a village

seek another confrontation in a few months.

As Saddam Hussein was conducting his tour - during which he fired a rifle into the air as villagers chanted his name - UN inspectors were for the first time visiting his palace compound in Tikrit, the city from which he and his close family come, in their search for chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them. "Everything went smoothly," said Antonio Montero, the Portuguese Ambassador to the UN, who is also chairman of the UN sanctions committee on Iraq.

The inspectors from the UN Special Committee on Iraq, previously known for their aggressiveness, are now accompanied by 20 diplomats as they visit the eight presidential sites. Their presence is part of the deal agreed on 23 February by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, when he visited Baghdad and met Saddam Hussein. Mr Montero said there were many buildings under construction at the Tikrit palace compound. On Sunday the inspectors saw another of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Mosul.

Although Kofi Annan said the diplomats would not reduce the authority of Richard Butler, the head of the UN special committee, the palace inspections appear to be very much under diplomatic control. This will also please the Iraqi government which has accused Mr Butler of confrontational tactics.

The inspectors have now been seen four out of eight palaces. Jayantha Dhanapala, the UN Under Secretary for Disarmament, in charge of the accompanying diplomats, yesterday said: "Fifty per cent of our job is done and we are well on the way to implementing the memorandum of understanding as far as the initial rounds of visits is concerned."

Saddam Hussein's attempt as a student to assassinate General Qassem, during which he was shot in the leg, has often been retold in Iraqi propaganda. It was the first step in his career in the ruling Ba'ath Party, which overthrew and killed General Qassem in a military coup four years later.



Saddam Hussein: Tales of heroism and bravery

on the Tigris through which he had fled at the time. "My clothes were wet, my leg was injured and I hadn't eaten properly for four days." He added: "How can I describe it? It is hard now to describe how I got out of the water."

The reappearance of Saddam Hussein in public - a month ago he visited villages in Mosul in northern Iraq - is important. It shows he is feeling more confident about his personal safety. He is also convinced that Iraq is escaping from its political and economic isolation. "With God's will your lives will be prosperous and the embargo will end," he said.

A further implication is that the Iraqi leader is not planning a further confrontation with UN inspectors looking for his weapons of mass destruction. At the end of the crisis, which almost led to war with the US and Britain in February, many diplomats assumed he would



Relaunch: The stars of 'Lost in Space' arriving for the film's Hollywood premiere. Shown are (from left) William Hurt, Jack Johnson, Heather Graham, Lacey Chabert, Mimi Rogers, Gary Oldman and Matt LeBlanc. The movie is inspired by a 1960s television series. Photograph: Reuters

Old enemies from Lebanon's civil war unite to maintain the social divide

By Robert Fisk
in Beirut

SINCE their 16-year civil war ended in 1990, the Lebanese have piously acknowledged that their country should be deconfessionalised, and that religious barriers can only be broken down by a non-sectarian civil society. That, however, was only for public consumption - as President Elias Hrawi has found to his cost.

As a first, tentative step away from the divisions that cost 150,000 Lebanese lives, he has mildly told his cabinet he intends to introduce civil marriage to Lebanon. After all, couples of mixed faith were being forced to change their religion or fly to Cyprus to marry. Surely a civil wedding would solve the problem.

You would have thought Mr Hrawi was suggesting mass suicide. Muslim sheikhs and Maronite Christian bishops who have been spouting off for years on the need to deconfessionalise Lebanon, roared with anger at this diminution of their power. Outside the office of the Sunni Grand Mufti in Beirut, thousands gathered to scream "Allahu akbar" -

God is greater - in protest at Mr Hrawi's proposal.

The Maronite Patriarch, Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir, announced in a Sunday sermon that civil marriage was against the teachings of the church. Mr Hrawi - the president must always be a Christian Maronite under Lebanon's sectar-

ian system - remains unmoved. He has, after all, uncovered the hypocrisy that lies at the heart of Lebanon's body politic: the desperate need to maintain a sectarian society, so that no religious community feels left out of the system, while maintaining the facade that the country's ultimate aim is to deconfessionalise.

Young people generally welcomed the idea, especially the tens of thousands

but divorce, death and inheritance. Under Muslim religious law, divorce of a woman is decided according to previously agreed dowries; inheritance is divided among children and relatives - the details differ between Christians and Muslims. Civil marriage would effectively do away with these restrictions and take away the power of the religious courts. Inevitably, it would give greater equality to women.

Tracts are now circulating in Lebanese cities. "Today, it's civil marriage - tomorrow it will be the end of religious courts," they say. The Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri - the premier has to be a Sunni Muslim - has refused to countersign the decree, although the speaker of parliament, Nabi Berri (a Shiite) agrees with Mr Hrawi. There are suspicions that Messn Berri and Hrawi may even have cooked up the whole crisis to force Mr Hariri to resign - which Mr Hariri has no intention of doing - but they also have the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, on their side.

Clerics continue to insist on the importance of religious law although its results have often been as preposterous as they are tragic. An old friend of mine who died last year had converted to Islam to marry his wife - but was refused burial in a Christian cemetery by a priest who angrily told his family to find a Muslim grave. The Christian wife of another friend died during the war in the Muslim sector of Beirut; only a Muslim cemetery could be found for her, but the sheikh refused to bury her - until he had posthumously converted her to Islam.

Berlin airlift divides city again

By Imre Karacs
in Bonn

THE SKIES over Berlin will fill again this summer with flying objects of every kind, in salute of the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift. There will be a series of commemorations, including a visit by President Bill Clinton, and a military tattoo performed by the Bundeswehr.

There are also plans, appropriately, for an air display, but this particular event has already hit turbulence. According to the screenplay, an international fleet of hydroplanes will take off from the Wannsee, the lake by which West Berliners cool off on hot days. When the hydroplanes are gone, the main attraction will begin: a fly-past of military hardware.

It is the latter, in particular the precise formation, that has triggered protests. For the organisers felt it necessary to invite not only the representatives of Britain, France, the US and Germany, but also of the extinct Soviet Union and its East German satellite.

The choreography envisages an air force jet with East German markings flying side-by-side with the craft of the - contemporary - Luftwaffe. They are supposed to be pursued by fighter planes of the four powers which controlled Berlin until German reunification, including a MiG-29 in the colours of the former Evil Empire.

The locals are overwhelmed and the politicians divided. "The participation of the MiG-29 will trigger hostility among many older Berliners," said a Social Democrat spokesman. Yet, the Social Democrats say Russia should be present at the ceremonies.

Their Christian Democrat coalition partners in the regional government are insisting, however, that no Russian aircraft should besmirch the local airspace. The left-wing Greens and the post-communist PDS, meanwhile, are accusing the critics of "Cold War mentality". To them, a MiG flying over Berlin represents peace and security in a new Europe.

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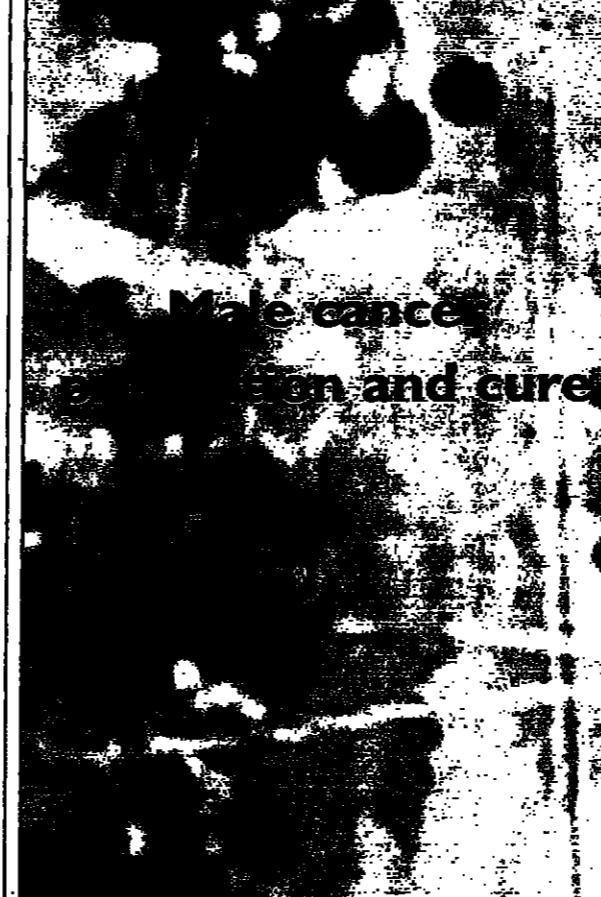
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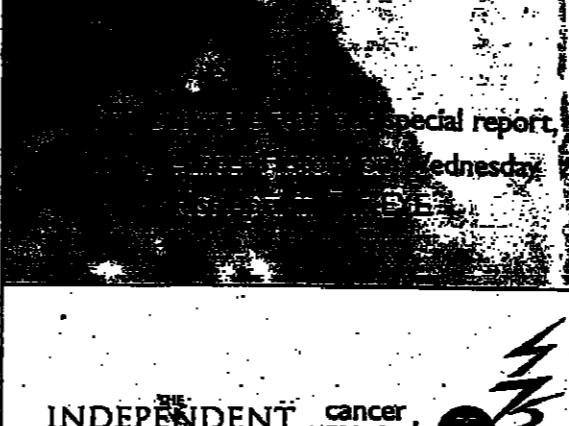
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China frees man held in cage for five years

A MENTALLY ill man has been freed from a cage where he was held for at least five years by police in southern China after stabbing an officer, an official newspaper said.

Photographs published by the *Yangcheng Evening News* on Sunday showed Deng Oiliu being fed through the bars of the coffin-sized cage. Deng, whose plight was publicised by *The Independent* yesterday, was detained 10 years ago after he stabbed and wounded a police officer. — AP, Peking

Bethlehem mayor dies

ELIAS FREIJ, the mayor of Bethlehem, died on Sunday. Freij, 80, died of kidney and heart failure after being admitted to hospital for dialysis. Bethlehem's mayor for 25 years and a Greek Orthodox Christian, Freij was host to an annual Christmas Eve party outside the Church of the Nativity that drew thousands of pilgrims. When Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat set up an autonomous Palestinian government in 1994, Freij became the first Palestinian minister of tourism.

— AP, Bethlehem

Obituary, page 18

Pope calls for alms for Cuba

PILGRIMS attending a Holy Thursday mass led by the Pope will be asked to make a donation to buy medicines for the sick in Cuba. The Pope, who recently visited the island, called on the United States to end its embargo against Cuba, insisting that trade bans hurt only the poor and sick. — Reuters, Rome

Norway warned on Rushdie

IRAN has warned that continued contacts between Norwegian officials and Salman Rushdie might further damage relations. The warning was made by a foreign ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi after the Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, met the writer in Oslo on Friday. Rushdie was visiting Norway to receive an honorary doctorate at Tromsø university.

— Reuters, Tehran

Fall kills Timor rebel chief

THE LEADER of rebels fighting Indonesian rule in East Timor died in an accident on the island, Portuguese radio Antena reported. Konis Santana died after falling into a ravine. Jose Ramos-Horta, exiled East Timor resistance leader and co-winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, confirmed the report. — AP, Lisbon

Berlin
airlift
divide
city
again

Yeltsin gives disgraced spy chief key post



By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

BORIS YELTSIN yesterday moved to bring order to the chaos caused by his government's fall, by saying he will not run again for office and naming a once-disgraced ex-security service chief as Interior Minister.

Despite hints from his aides that he is keeping his options open about a third term, Mr Yeltsin - whose presidency has been overshadowed by ill-health - indicated he will stand

down at the next elections in 2000. His government, fired en masse last week, remains in pieces as his inexperienced new Prime Minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, 35, prepares for a confirmation battle with the lower house of parliament.

All the main parliamentary factions have expressed misgivings about his nomination, and the Communists - who hold nearly a third of the seats - have demanded its withdrawal. A vote is due on Friday.

But, as Russia's political

circles reel in the aftermath of the government's sacking, one part of the jigsaw slotted into place. The President named as acting Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin, a former head of the counter-intelligence services notorious for his bungled role in the Chechen war.

The 46-year-old lieutenant-general - appointed Justice Minister last year after the previous incumbent was photographed frolicking in a Moscow steam bath with two women - has remained close to

Mr Yeltsin, despite a patchy career. In September 1994 he led an operation to arm pro-Moscow Chechen opposition forces with tanks, anti-aircraft missiles, and helicopters.

Although he later criticised Russia's decision to send troops into the republic, starting a 21-month war, he is still blamed by rights groups for his role.

Among other things, his agency, then called the FSK, supplied the Kremlin with misleading intelligence about the pro-independence forces. In

June 1995 he was sacked after Chechen fighters took 1,500 people hostage in south Russia.

His appointment indicates his links to the intelligence community are valued by Mr Yeltsin, who, mindful no doubt, of the attempted coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991, has gone to lengths to maintain tight control over the security services.

The minister, whose appointment must be approved by parliament, becomes Russia's chief policeman, a role previously filled by the hawkish Anatoly Kulikov, sacked last week. Mr Stepashin will hope to see Mr Yeltsin through to the end of his presidency in 2000 - if that is, the President sticks by his words.

Although Mr Yeltsin indicated he would not be running again, he has a record of contradictory behaviour. If no other candidate stands a chance of victory, and his health holds up, he will be under pressure from the ruling elite to change his mind. For now, Mr Yeltsin has

tentatively aligned himself with Viktor Chernomyrdin, the ex-prime minister, without giving him unequivocal backing.

The sacked prime minister would head the government's election campaign, he said yesterday, before meeting the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. "We need a strong leader and, bearing in mind that I, so to speak, am not taking part in the elections, we need reinforcements. That is why we rearranged the pieces and put everything in place."

No tears in Florida as Black Widow goes to the chair

By Phil Davison
in Miami

"OLD SPARKY", Florida's 75-year-old electric chair, lived up to its name. Smoke wafted from 54-year-old grandmother Judy Buenoano's right leg during the 38 seconds they passed more than 2,000 volts through her body. From behind a glass partition, a dozen witnesses grimaced as the "Black Widow" died.

She was the first woman executed in Florida since a slave called Celia was hanged in 1848 for killing her master. Buenoano was also the first woman to be electrocuted in the United States since 1957. Most states now use lethal injections.

A prosecutor dubbed her the Black Widow because she poisoned her husband for life insurance money after he returned from Vietnam in the Seventies. But that murder appeared almost tame compared with the way she killed her teenage son. He was disabled, wearing leg braces, in both cases after taking out life insurance policies on them. She changed her name to the Hispanic version, Buenoano, which means "good year" after her husband, Air Force Sergeant James Goodyear, died.

Perhaps as a result of the nature of her crimes, there was little outcry in Florida or anywhere else over taking Buenoano's life. Unlike Karla Faye Tucker, who was killed by lethal injection in Texas last month, the Black Widow was not photogenic, gave few interviews and did not seek worldwide support for her clemency appeals.

She also killed a boyfriend with arsenic and tried to blow up another boyfriend with a home-made car bomb, in both

cases after taking out life insurance policies on them. She changed her name to the Hispanic version, Buenoano, which means "good year" after her husband, Air Force Sergeant James Goodyear, died.

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As clerics face sex abuse charges in Ireland, Clare Garner wonders how much longer the Catholic Church can avoid facing up to reality



Act of devotion: Priests during their ordination in St Peter's Basilica, Rome. Many find the vow of celibacy impossible to keep

Photograph: AP

The priests who fell to Earth

BARELY a week goes by without more lurid headlines reminding us of the depressingly sordid side of the Roman Catholic Church. This week five members of a Catholic order will appear in Galway district court facing a total of 76 charges of abuse.

"All of us sit in dread that something's going to come in the morning post or newspapers," admitted Christopher Budd, Bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Portsmouth, who is

responsible for handling the problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. "I don't read the *News of the World*, but sometimes I have to."

Yesterday the Christian Brothers, an international Roman Catholic teaching order, came clean about the sexual abuse which has been going on for years in its schools in Ireland. In a national newspaper advertisement, it apologised to any victims "who complained of abuse and were not listened to".

The notion of not being listened to will undoubtedly strike a chord with other victims of abuse by clergy in this country. All too often, the Church's response to sexual abuse allegations is to hope they will go away. Priests are quietly sent off for treatment or moved to another parish. They are not struck off.

Much of the sexual abuse involving clergy occurs in a counselling context. Anyone who leans on their parish priest is entitled to feel that he, of all people, should understand the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. He has, after all, taken a vow of celibacy. But if the boundaries are crossed and a relationship develops, in many cases the Church refuses to accept vicarious responsibility.

Mary Edwards, an advocacy worker for the Abuse in Therapy and Counselling Support Network, finds fighting cases involving clergy the hardest of all because the Church is so obstructive. "If I take someone to the British Association of Counselling and they find someone guilty, they are struck off. It's a pro-active investigation. With the Church, the situation is no better than with unregistered astrology counsellors," she says.

"How long can one go on saying that the Church is not responsible when it makes every other decision which relates to these men's lives? It just moves them to another parish. That is putting other people at risk."

One of Ms Edwards' clients is Pamela Brown, 43, who turned to her parish priest, Father Terence Fitzpatrick, for counselling about sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her father. Fr Fitzpatrick, who had accompanied Ms Brown to see the psychologist who had been treating her for mental problems brought on by the abuse, proceeded to coax her into having sexual contact with him.

He has admitted in police statements that Ms Brown's allegations were essentially true, yet Ms Edwards cannot get the Church to assume any responsibility for the damage inflicted on her client. Fr Fitzpatrick is still practising as a priest in four parishes in the Reading area.

The Church has argued the legal aspect of "consenting adults", but last week Bishop Budd commented on the Fitzpatrick case. "I would share your alarm," he said. "Whatever diocese it is may well think 'It's not children', but we have to be very careful because a lot of adult women are very vulnerable, particularly if they've been abused themselves. I'm surprised he's still in the ministry. As a bishop, I would hope to be more interventionist - get him out of the diocese. He obviously needs help, as indeed does the woman."

"I suppose we've learnt the hard way that abusers don't tend to change if you just move them around."

What action should the Church be taking in terms of treating the known perpetrators - and is there such a thing as a cure for abusing clergymen? Ray Wyre has looked at the problems of sexual abuse as they

relate to the clergy. He was the director of the pioneering and controversial Gracewell Clinic, Britain's only residential centre for sex offenders, in Birmingham, and has devoted his career to working with men like the notorious child murderer, Robert Black. Mr Wyre is internationally recognised for his work with sex offenders, religious and otherwise.

One of the key reasons why the problem of sexual abuse is so acute in the Catholic Church is, Mr Wyre believes, the celibacy rule. Celibacy, he says, should be voluntary. "Priests who were sexually abused as boys see celibacy as a place of safety, but soon discover that they are not going to escape the problem in that way. There is a personality type which likes the concept of never laying with anyone," he said.

"Celibacy is about a choice and a decision about sexuality, not a denial. The moment you repress and deny there can be a problem of how it leaks out. I talk about 'fantasy leakage'. It's amazing how priests' sexual fantasies leak out in the context of women. A lot of priests, once they start to fail sexually, take the attitude 'once I fail I might as well fail'. They target whoever is available - men, women and children."

Mr Wyre believes that some direct instruction at seminaries about the difficulties surrounding sexuality would also help. "You can still train to be



Ray Wyre, who has counselled abusing priests, believes celibacy should be voluntary

a priest without sexuality and celibacy being discussed. Theological colleges should be looking at the issues surrounding boundaries and counselling."

Mr Wyre is astounded by some of the attitudes to sexual sin that he comes across. "You have people in the Church who think masturbation is a greater sin than having a relationship with a child."

Bishop Budd agrees with Mr Wyre that sexually abusing priests are ultimately better served by treatment in a secular, rather than religious, setting. "I think, at a certain stage, the priest has to face quite bluntly - without the cushioning of faith or religion - what he has done."

And in a radical departure from the Church's position in the past, Bishop Budd suggested that abusing priests should pay the price of their ministry. "At the end of the day, someone who has an active faith and wants to discover it in a wholesome fashion has to show repentance. For a priest, that may be to say 'I'll give up my ministry'."

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When April really is the cruellest month

The joys of spring can bring nothing but misery if you suffer from depression, writes Virginia Ironside

"IN THE Spring, a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove; In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," wrote Tennyson. But there is a group for whom spring is a time of dread and whose minds turn more to suicide than love – they are depressed.

No one knows why there are more suicides in the spring than at any other time of the year, or why agony aunts' post-bags are bulging and psychiatrists' diaries are full. There is vague talk of a change of light having a depressive effect; others feel that the gulf between reality and the depressive mind widens when spring comes. Everything may be full of hope, but this can make the depressed feel worse not better.

As a consequence, with the exception of sufferers from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), who look forward to the healing sunlight of a new year, spring can be a difficult time for those one in 20 people with a

tendency to depression. But what help can they expect? If they go to see their doctor? These days, most psychiatrists agree that there isn't just one answer. They try to treat depression on three fronts: through counselling or cognitive therapy, change in circumstance, or medical intervention.

Counselling or cognitive therapy may help patients get to the root of the depression and sadness and find the tools to fight it on their own. A change in circumstances – a single parent whose father has just died and whose child has Down's Syndrome, for example, may be understandably depressed and could be helped with extra care.

The other form of treatment is anti-depressants. Many people bank at a chemical cure, but if you take 100 people with depression and give them anti-depressants, 70 will make a good recovery. Their reluctance is partly because they do

not really understand these drugs. We take antibiotics if we have a septic throat, we gobble down painkillers if we hurt, but anti-depressants confuse us and that isn't just one answer.

They try to treat depression on three fronts: through counselling or cognitive therapy, change in circumstance, or medical intervention.

In the Seventies and Eighties, there was a great deal of prejudice about anti-depressants. Since one of the symptoms of depression is that "everything is my fault", people flock to counsellors to try to sort out it out.

Counselling can be excellent, but no amount of talking can cure a depression with a chemical base. Any depression, with its classic symptoms of sleep problems, waking up in the morning feeling frightened and improving during the day, loss of sexual interest, a feeling that life is pointless, is really worth trying to treat medically.

I am a jangling mess of daily medication – a cocktail of

five different drugs and eight pills a day – but the medication stops me from feeling suicidal. You may not have to take the tablets for more than six months, but it's absolutely crazy that it must be added, confuse a lot of GPs.

This is partly due to the fact that we confuse non-addictive anti-depressants with addictive tranquillisers (which are quite a different ball game), and partly because there appear to be so many of them – 28 different medicines licensed for use as anti-depressants, to be precise.

The symptoms of depression are thought to be caused by some natural brain chemicals, noradrenaline and serotonin, becoming underactive.

Anti-depressants work by increasing the level of these chemicals in the brain or decreasing others. They usually take between two and three weeks to work, so it is worth persisting with them.

But if they don't work, there is no point just giving up on anti-depressants altogether, because an anti-depressant that lifts one person's depression might have no effect on another sufferer.

Since GPs have only got a basic knowledge of what is available, it is worth asking for a referral to a psychiatrist if what the GP prescribes doesn't work, simply because he or

she knows their subject so much better.

Sometimes a depressed person may be given a cocktail of the drugs described on the right, one of which may work to enhance the action of the other.

Lithium is usually prescribed for cases of manic depression, when people feel incredibly low for a few months and then go into a manic high, often resulting in over-spending, sex-drive, or wild ideas for new and *totally impractical new businesses*. If you have lithium, your mood swings should lessen – but you will need regular blood tests to make sure the dosage you are on continues to be safe.

If the anti-depressive drugs fail, there is always ECT – Electro-Convulsive Therapy. Again, people cringe at the thought of it, imagining that they will be in the hands of mad

doctors who will shoot volts of electricity through their brains when they don't know what they're doing. Up to a point, this is true – because they don't know what they are doing. But the other truth is that when someone is so unreachable or acutely depressed that all other treatments have failed, ECT can have miraculous effects.

A friend of mine who suffered from post-puerperal psychosis and was, quite simply, a zombie, had a few shots and was back to her old energetic self within weeks. With the aid of muscle relaxants, the only convulsions may involve a couple of toes twitching. Any memory loss is nearly always short term.

This treatment works for eight out of 10 people and requires a patient's written consent, unless he or she is so bad that relatives need to sign on their behalf.

ANTI-DEPRESSANTS

Tricyclic anti-depressants:

Amirtriptyline (Tryptizol);

imipramine (Tofranil);

clomipramine (Anafranil);

Doxepin (Prothiaden);

Loferamine (Gamanil).

These have been around for about 30 years and work by deactivating an enzyme in the brain called monoamine oxidase.

They also affect other parts of the body, so it is wise not to eat anything with tyramine in it, such as

pickled herrings, caviar,

Marmite, Chianti, or cheese

or broad bean pods.

Other anti-depressants:

Venlafaxine (Effexor);

L-tryptophan (Optimax), a

naturally occurring chemical

that we all take in small

quantities in our diet; and

fluoxetine (Prozac), a

major tranquiliser which also

acts as an anti-depressant.



Unhappy days are here again: Most of us find blossom time and lighter evenings uplifting, but others find them depressing

Photograph: John Lawrence

Itchy rashes and sticky moments



DR PHIL HAMMOND

OF LATE, readers have been sending me a considerable number of problems and queries. Alas, I haven't got time to answer them in person, but I'm quite prepared to pad out the occasional column with those selected at random from a large, home-made tombola I keep under the stairs.

I've developed a rash of small blisters around my body hair and it itches like mad. Could this be anything to do with the jacuzzi at my health club?

Monty, Bath
Yes, Monty, it could, but I'd need to see it to be sure. It sounds like you've got what President Clinton might call "hot-tub folliculitis". This is an infection of the hair follicles caused by pseudomonas, a bacteria which thrives in poorly chlorinated whirlpools. Get the management to check the levels and avoid the hot tub if it looks cloudy. On the other hand, it may be caused by a fungus or staphylococcus and have nothing to do with your health club. Either way, you need treatment, so pop along to your GP. Alternatively, you can fix me your rash on 0171 293 2451.

Can I lose weight by sleeping? Anne, Leeds
In theory, yes. To keep ticking over, your

body burns off a mammoth 65 calories an hour when you're asleep, so provided your daily consumption doesn't exceed this (ie 1,560 calories per 24 hours), you'll lose weight. However, there is a downside to spending all your life in bed (muscle wasting, pressure sores, pneumonia, body odour, etc) and at the very least, you'd have to pay someone to turn you at regular intervals. I'd recommend interspersing your slumber with a bit of light movement.

I've got asthma, so I have switched from feather-filled pillows to synthetic ones, like I was told to by my GP. Trouble is, I'm even more wheezy now. Why?

Sally, Glasgow
The theory behind the switch was that feathers make asthma worse for some patients. Unfortunately, we now know you're more likely to be worse on a synthetic pillow because the house-dust mite, which triggers many attacks, prefers man-made bedding. So, switch back.

I suffer dreadfully from premature ejaculation and I think my girlfriend may have noticed. Any suggestions?

Colin, Bishop's Lydiard
Well, Colin, some partners like it quickly because it avoids all that nasty grunting business – so it may not be a problem at all. Indeed, the 1978 Hite Report of 11,239 men found that 21 per cent come within a minute and a further 62 per cent before five. If you do want to prolong the agony, you will have to increase your tolerance to sexual excitement. "Holding back" usually doesn't work; unless you can conjure up a particularly vivid picture of Jimmy Neil, and penis-training is generally called for. The following method was described by a bloke called Semans (I kid you not). All you need is a partner and some lubrication.

1) Ask your partner to bring you to the brink manually. When this point is reached, ask her to squeeze tight just underneath the glans (or cherry, as we doctors call it). When the urge has gone, relax and repeat the process, allowing yourself to make a

mess on the fourth go (you can try this alone, too).

2) Repeat the above using a lubricant such as KY jelly to stimulate vaginal intercourse. A blindfold helps too.

3) Use this stop/start method for intercourse with your partner on top. Put your hands on her hips to guide her motions, stopping when you're nearly there. Again, let go on the fourth occasion. With time and training, your "brink interval" will increase and you'll feel confident to start thrusting again. Note: The Semans method works best if you both have a sense of humour and worst if only one of you has.

Does black coffee sober you up?

Jane, London
Yes and no. Caffeine is a stimulant that increases your alertness but it is also, like alcohol, a diuretic (ie: makes you pee) and can make your dehydration worse. Contrary to popular belief, it does nothing to speed up the breakdown of alcohol in your blood – it takes an hour to metabolise each glass of wine or half pint of normal strength beer – so you can't drive for at least 12 hours after a session, no matter how many double espressos you've had.

Why does my doctor go "Pop" all the time? Suzy, Birmingham
I presume you mean say "pop" rather than flounce loudly. Pop is perhaps the most overused word in medicine. Look, I even used it in my first answer. An average morning surgery would include "Pop behind the curtains", "Pop up onto the couch", "I'll just pop in the thermometer/speculum/other cold piece of metal", "Pop to the loo", "Pop the sample into reception" and "Pop back in a week's time". I've no idea why we do it, but you should be thankful you've got a GP who speaks to you at all.

Please don't send any more problems to Dr Phil at The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

Phil Hammond's "Trust Me, I'm a Doctor" is on BBC2 tonight at 8pm.

STUDENT CHOICES

Thursday 2 April 1998
Business Design Centre, London N1

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Ordinary objects of desire

Joseph Cornell's discarded, familiar items aren't just a load of old rubbish, they represent an ongoing theme of the art of the artless, writes Richard D North

JOSEPH CORNELL made a name for himself half a century ago as a man who most mined his own rather limited life, but also quite small world - New York and its suburbs - for shards of memory, scraps of equipment. A broken wine glass, a portion of electrical plug, a bit of a map, these were things made redundant by progress or abuse, which he treasured and presented to us because they trigger a reflection.

Joseph Cornell's *Vision of Spiritual Order* (Reaktion Books, 20 April, £14.95) by Lindsay Blair, a committed Cornellite, shows how he turned these items into something which was quite like art, but the value of which to its audience was to do with it being artless. He seemed to be saying that one might order oneself, and especially get to grips with the trifle, by being careful about the contents of one's dustbin.

This is a sort of work which is very resonant just now. When Damien Hirst shows us his pharmacists' cupboards of mind-enhancing drugs, he is casually reminding us to look carefully at the dreams - and the life-avoidance strategies - which lie within these clinical bits of furniture. The...p... is arises because one doesn't usually look in a shopfront or a clinic for visual clues about the big issues.

Hirst may seem heartless as well as artless, but the effect remains a substantial jolt. The device reminds us of 17th-century still-lifes, and especially those *trompe l'oeil*s of letter-boards to which are taped and pinned the lucky hands of cards, the tradesmen's bills, the scrawled notes in which our successes and failures and hopes and fears are also flagged up. It is seen in still-lifes, whose power comes from the transforming force of close inspection of the ordinary. Nicholas Volley's work at the Browse and Darby gallery (19 Cork Street, London W1, until 9 April) relishes kitchen and pantry in a big-boned, jolly sort of way which would only have slightly startled a 17th or 18th-century still-life painter.

The Albemarle Gallery (49 Albemarle Street, London W1) opens a show of *trompe l'oeil*s by Elena and Michel Gran (2-25 April), a French painting team who depict maps and playing cards and much other detritus of a cod-Medieval and early modern world, and though the joke of these seems a little overdone, and the painting a little sentimental, some of them hit the spot, as though a memory had been stirred by a sudden waft of perfume. The show will be followed on the same walls by glamorous, glowing paintings by the Bosnian, Mersad Berber (30 April-23 May), in which *trompe l'oeil*s of collage make visual puns, again to perhaps over-heated effect, but to effect nonetheless.

Cornell concentrated on objects rather

than painting, but the point is the same. He produced "dossiers" which were accumulations of files, a bit like a child's scrapbook in purpose. And then there were his "boxes", which are most like art, because they have a front and a frame. The found objects within make us wonder what they meant to the artist. And the supposition is that Cornell had a half subconscious thought that he might force us to consider what such things mean to us, never minding why he lighted on them.

There is something in the air now which makes such work doubly powerful. We know well enough that scrapbooks and collage and decoupage have been the nearly artistic activity of ordinary people for generations. Our window ledges and office desks have always been littered with objects which acquire a talismanic quality, and whose arrangement and rearrangement is done with fetishistic care.

Nabokov wrote of the psychotic end of this sort of obsessiveness, an exquisite over-refinement of feeling and self-awareness which shades into depravity. Lindsay Blair's account of Cornell makes one think he might well have been a pillar-or-three short of a happy bunny. Like the Surrealists he admired, he was infused with ideas about exploring the subconscious. The idea of a freefall through associations mattered. He held himself together by making little altars of the humdrum, small sacraments of preservation. Mental chaos was soothed by listing and assembling things and ideas, by making a taxonomy of litter.

But even those who think of themselves as robustly well or normal can be touched by this stuff. There is now a quite strong - often suspect - revolt against the Modern, and perhaps against the western. It takes many forms, but it is clearly seen in our admiration of images such as those in The Art of Holly Russia at the Royal Academy (until 14 June). These must be the most artistically intelligent, various and stylish of any collection of icons, and yet they remain - by the highest Western standards - inadequate technically, tending to the monotonous, and excessively stylised. They move us, though partly because they remind us of a tradition in which not artfulness, but seriousness of purpose, is admired. Icons are intended for worship not scrutiny, for adoration not criticism. That wrong-foots us: it's our absence of prayer, not the painter's absence of genius that we must address.

That's true of this entire genre: Hirst or Cornell are admired only for what they choose to show us, and the effect they create in us, not really for their arrangement or depiction. They join the icon painter in



'Le Château de Cartes' by Elena and Michel Gran, French painters who depict the detritus of a cod-Medieval world

Photograph: Albemarle Gallery

conveying a message and invoking a response. If any of them were more intellectually or technically accomplished - or it showed - they might be less effective.

It is tempting to see much of this tendency as dim-witted or cowardly. But there is something solid, too, in our nostalgia for an age of faith, but also for an age which had the luxury of leaving old things around. There are physical as well as religious or cultural traditions we fear we should not have jettisoned. Sometimes, we simply recreate them, nervously. Prince Charles' Poundbury (Some first stage

houses remain: C G Fry and Sons, 01305 257267) is a rather good architectural ensemble. If his architectural dossier, his collage, is a bit comical, isn't it better than hammerhead cul-de-sacs?

So many of us now, thank goodness, have new things around us that we are bound to place a premium on the aura and the patina which only long use confers on the old. *Country Living* has just published a guide to Architectural Salvage centres called "Reclaim and Restore" (in association with SALVO, 01890 820333). It lists Bailey's, a household fittings

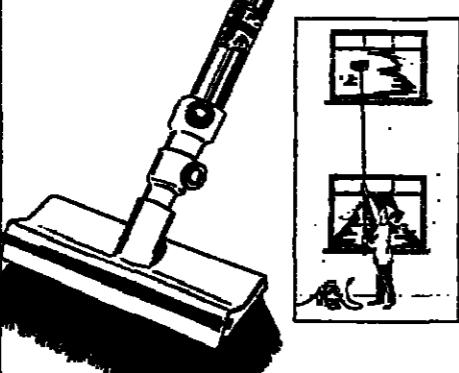
store at Ross-on-Wye, outside which there's an old bicycle, rotting in a camp and disingenuous way among the wrought iron features on sale. This is salesmanship of a high order. The place sells many new things, but they are presented in the manner of an architectural salvage depot. The baths, the tables, mantles are designed to go into the kind of houses in which expensive kitchen units come ready "dressed". The window of *L'Occitane*, the soap shop in Regent Street, and the products within, are designed to evoke an age of "proper" ironmongers, of enamel

and wood, to recall memories of carbolic while erasing the chilblains.

All this is as easy to send up as Andy Goldsworthy's sheep-fold, which is no more than dry stone walling with attitude. Often enough, nostalgia is merely cowardly, "spirituality" merely self-serving, the artless merely a con. But it's hard not to admire the force of much of this iconographic material. Our civilisation has always played around with these themes. But it has seldom made such a fabulous assault on the familiar. A reaction was inevitable.

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At home with the Ideal World Exhibition

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov -
The Palace of Projects:
The Roundhouse.
Whitechapel Open.
Whitechapel Gallery

Peter Mandelson, making the opening speech, was reminded of his Dome. He'd just had a tour of The Palace of Projects - a labyrinthine structure created by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, in the Roundhouse at Chalk Farm. And perhaps he was right to be reminded. Who knows yet? For us listening to his words last week, the most obvious point of similarity was that, with the Palace, as with the Greenwich Dome, Mr Mandelson found the experience "impossible to describe".

It is not, but it would take a while to tell it all. The Palace, an Artangel project, represents three years' work by the Russian husband-and-wife team. It's a piece of indoor architecture, a round white two-storey block, which rises in a sun-cut under the roof of the old theatre, like a DIY version of some optimistic blueprint of early modernism. Go inside, and you're in a network of rooms, divided by walls made of a sort of solid

visibility spreads into the adjoining chambers and gradually fades.

You walk through, as if in a mist. And inside every room the Kabakovs have placed a handful of "projects": wooden desks to sit at, on each a sheet of paper with a written proposal (plus diagrams), and an illustrative 3D model, scale or actual size, nearby. The proposals outline useful schemes for improving things and the scope is wide - the mind, the home, society, the planet, the cosmos. It's an Ideal World Exhibition.

Examples. A proposal for "The Punishment of Household Objects", to take out your grievances on the inanimate world - a curtailed-off "black corner" where "guilty" pots and buckets can be stood. Or there's "What else can be said about this?", a proposal to encourage public reflection: a glove, say, is placed on the ground, and lectures placed around it, each with a different meditation on the glove.

It's clear, of course, that these plans are improbable, or impractical, or wholly impossible - frankly a bit mad. The proposals are written in a tone of naive certainty and helpfulness,

There are references to the "noosphere" and the harnessing of mysterious "energies". The models are constructed with enthusiastic, makeshift workiness, and the schemes themselves are often of the string-and-cardboard variety.

Each project is credited to a (fictional) Russian citizen as if the results of a competition for

puise generally. These things are lightly mocked - but at the same time honoured.

The Palace of Projects is a work in praise of human wishes, while alive to the ways a bright idea can

cause more problems than it solves

amateur inventors. You seem to have entered "cranks' heaven. Is this some kind of satire? Or just wacky?

Not quite either. It's certainly very funny, and the Kabakovs are presumably taking a poke at old Soviet-style designs for world betterment, and at the abiding Russian interest in weird science, in parapsychology and what they call cosmology (meaning something much more supernatural than it does in the West), and at the utopian im-

be seen to be believed, and disbelieved.

THE Whitechapel Open is

open. Open shows are good. They have the minimum of overall agenda, being a collision between the miscellaneous works submitted and the various tastes of the selectors. And they flagrantly put art-works in competition with each other, not only for selection, but (once chosen) for the attention and favour of the viewer. So, com-

pared with solo shows and proactively curated shows, the viewer feels much more in charge of the experience. This is good.

That's the hope anyway, and this biennial exhibition always promises well. This year, it's spread over three places: the Whitechapel Gallery itself, The Tannery in Bermondsey and various sites around Canary Wharf. Work of every sort by about 130 artists is on view. It should be various at least.

It is and it isn't. And thinking about agendas, didn't I read one of the selectors saying that they went for anything that made them laugh? It does look that way. There are some sober works here, but Novelty Shop is the dominant impression.

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov - The Palace of Projects: The Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Road (Tue-Sun 12-8pm, last admission 7pm) Until 10 May. £5, £3 concs.

Whitechapel Open, Whitechapel Gallery, Whitechapel High St (11-5, Tue-Sun), The Tannery, 57 Bermondsey St (12-6, Tue-Sun); at Canary Wharf (12-5, Wed-Sun). Until 31 May. Admission free

Tom Lubbock

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Back to the roots of Rolls-Royce

THIS NEWSPAPER is pleased that Rolls-Royce has been bought by a German firm. We are regretful too - Britain has lost ownership of another national institution. But what matters more is that good engineers and good business brains, backed by a really strong company, should save and rebuild a faded glory; that British jobs are saved and created. Today, in the absence of an independent British car manufacturer of any serious scale, that meant a foreign owner. A German one is fine.

The success and failure of Rolls-Royce is a parable of much else in 20th-century British manufacturing history. The company has "crafted" (as they call it) some of the most beautiful cars with some of the most evocative names in motoring history - Silver Ghost, Silver Cloud, Phantom, Wraith. The cars have been owned by heroic figures like John Lennon and Lawrence of Arabia, although Denis Thatcher was perhaps a more typical customer. Good old-fashioned engineering, selling on romance, a liberal splash of snobbery. But then came the rub to those in the know, Rolls-Royce ceased to make the best cars in the world some time back. It didn't innovate. It stuck with obsolete forms of production. Its marketing strategy was awful.

Lucky for Rolls-Royce enthusiasts. Bernd Pischetsrieder is quite a sentimental soul himself. When he bought Rover Group from British Aerospace he seemed to take the same satisfaction in acquiring a range of revered British marques that a little boy might when building his collection of Dinky toys. He was said to be particularly pleased that he would have the opportunity to revive Riley (deceased 1969) and Triumph (deceased 1983). What else could you expect from the distant cousin of Sir Alec Issigonis, inventor of the Austin Mini? More to the point is the substantial investment of £4bn BMW is making in developing a new Mini range, greatly expanding Land-Rover, revamping the middle-range Rovers and other projects. The purchase of Rolls-Royce is built on more than a drive to complete Bernd's collection of British classic car badges. Like the developments at Rover it is about making money, by restoring Rolls-Royce's technical pre-eminence.

Pischetsrieder and BMW have more reason than most to know about Rolls-Royce's more recent failings. BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Japanese luxury makes such as Lexus have been making, or crafting, faster, safer, better-handling, more advanced, more reliable, even quieter and more comfortable cars than the Rolls-Royce. They have been catching up.

It would be a crude but useful simplification to say that Rolls-Royce has been living off their past. The new Seraph is the first new design in 18 years. Probably the worst thing that happened to the Rolls was that the likes of Elvis Presley and Bernard Manning decided that they would show off in one. Once the temptation, however slight, came to sell cars effortlessly to the undiscerning affluent, the rot set in. A nice steady market of pools winners, entertainers and embassies is fine. But it does leave the marque open to a slightly vulgar and old-fashioned image and dulls the competitive urge.

Developing new models to conform to ever-stricter legislation and ever more demanding customers is very expensive. It is no longer good enough to build a big car with lots of leather and walnut. The next generation of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys will have to be class leaders in safety as well as performance and be environmentally friendly as well as comfy. BMW know all this and already supply engines and other components for the newer models. BMW are taking their investment seriously. They are taking Rolls-Royce back to its roots.

When Henry Royce, the engineer, met the Honourable Charles Rolls, the entrepreneur-adventurer, almost a hundred years ago, they found that they had a shared interest in building a car that would be ahead of its time, not simply an imposing piece of conspicuous consumption. It would have been next to impossible for Rolls-Royce's last British parent, Vickers, to make Rolls-Royce ahead of its time now. Both the Rolls-Royce and Bentley badges have enormous scope to be leaders in many segments of a more fragmented car market. There are new niches appearing with every motor show. Why shouldn't there be a new smaller sports model? Or a luxury 4-wheel drive vehicle like the Range-Rover? When Jaguar and Mercedes are planning or building smaller models, what would be wrong with a family saloon Rolls-Royce, the ultimate luxury rep-mobile?

BMW has spent £380m buying Rolls-Royce and will doubtless be investing much more. But that is the best way of ensuring that, as Henry Royce once famously put it, "the quality remains long after the price is forgotten". Rolls-Royce Motors has a silver future. *Vorsprung durch Technik*, as they say in Crewe.

Seeing the light

THERE ARE, at the last count, some 6.75 million lamp posts in the United Kingdom. A dog's dream, perhaps, but also a major untapped advertising opportunity. Yesterday the billboard giant Mills and Allen announced a pending deal with councils to put ads on lamp posts for the first time.

It's not a new idea. Where would traditional Parisian streetscapes have been without their piaffes and tressé round, green things bearing yellowing posters for Charles Trenet concerts. British streets hardly lack for advertising, though most of it is of the boringly official kind, such as those complicated placards - on lamp posts - telling when parking is permitted. On some urban streets there is now a jungle of hardware, and a few colourful ads on lamp posts are not going to make them any more untidy. Indeed you could say that advertisers are being somewhat unadventurous.

Once, in those far-off days when members of the Labour Party used to call themselves socialists, presumably on the grounds their dealings with capitalist banks were highly imaginative, councillors in one borough even flagged off their entire stock of lamp posts, albeit on a sale-or-return basis. Why not have companies sponsoring lamp posts and decorating them in their favourite colour? Urban dog owners could then take special pleasure by encouraging Rex to relieve himself against, say, the Virgin or British Airways or [fill in your own corporate favourite] lamp post.

Caught on video: the strange case of the buttercup massacre



MILES
KINGTON

A MOST unusual case is being heard at the High Court at the moment, in which a Mr Sam Proffitrole stands accused of infringing the country's obscenity laws. There are some very complex legal points at stake, as this extract from the first day's proceedings shows.

Counsel: You are Sam Proffitrole?

Sam: I am.

Counsel: Is that your real name?

Sam: No. It is a name I have assumed for tax purposes.

Counsel: For what tax purposes?

Sam: For the purpose of getting the Inland Revenue to send all my tax bills to someone else who is really called Sam Proffitrole.

Counsel: And, as a matter of interest, has it worked?

Sam: It must have. I haven't had any tax bills for years.

Counsel: I see. Now, you are in the business of manufacturing and issuing video films, under the name of MGM?

Counsel: That is correct.
Sam: What does MGM stand for?
Sam: Mayhem, Grief and Massacre.

Counsel: These films depict scenes of pain, death and torture, do they not?

Sam: No, they are wildlife films.

Counsel: By wildlife films, are you referring to such videos as *Beastly Buttercups*, *Rogue Arts*, *The Giant Snail Meets Godzilla*, *Wild Flowers Do Really Nasty Things to Each Other* and so on?

Sam: Yes, these excellent educational films are all available from me, and if any members of the jury wish to hire them at an advantageous rate...

Counsel: Thank you, Mr Proffitrole. Now,

you also have an extensive library of videos dealing with agricultural death and disaster...

Sam: I feel very strongly that the standard of agricultural safety is not as high as it should be and I have issued a series of farm safety instruction videos.

Counsel: And these farm safety instruction videos have such titles as *Death by Grain*, *Manure Massacre*, *Crushed by Cattle*, and *With the Sturvy on Top*?

Sam: Don't forget *Sucked to Death by Sows*.

That's one of my favourites.

Counsel: May I suggest to you that in fact these are deliberate attempts to gratify people's blood lust, masquerading as public safety items?

Might I suggest that people have already put out sadistic films using real-life footage of car crashes and violence in shopping malls, but that you have been the first

to realize that many sickening accidents are caught on closed-circuit film in farms? As an

example of this horror, may I perhaps just draw your attention to one incident in a video entitled *Slaughter in the Silo*. There is a scene

when a young farm worker disappears in a hopper of grain and dies horribly.

Sam: Ah, yes - that's a very moral passage,

demonstrating the sins of going into a grain

hopper unaccompanied, and without rope and climbing tackle.

Counsel: That may be so. May I also direct

your attention to another film of yours, called *Death by Dung Heap*, in which a young man is manured to death. If my eyes do not deceive me, it is the very same man who disappears in the grain in *Slaughter in the Silo*.

Sam: That is so. He is an actor called Jim Bray.

He also perishes in *Surprised by Poultry*, where

he is pecked to death by a giant cockerel.

Counsel: So the incidents in these films are faked?

Sam: In the sense that King Kong was not

really a live giant ape? In the sense that the

actor playing Hamlet does not really die,

though he pretends to? In the sense that Dermot Morgan was not really a Roman Catholic priest, only a fake one? Yes, I plead guilty to being a fake, in this grand tradition!

Counsel: So all these so-called actuality hor-

ror videos, purporting to be real-life vi-

lence, are all actually fakes and frauds!

Sam: Hold on, hold on! You can't have it

both ways. You can accuse me of issuing real

violence. Either I am a fraud, or a merchant

of sickeningly real horror. But which one

do you want me to be? I can't be both.

Counsel: Huummm... He has a point, my

Lord.

Judge: Yes, he has... Mr Proffitrole, are you

the maker of one of my favourite instruc-

tional farm videos called *The Vet Always*

Rings Twice?

Sam: Yes, I am.

Judge: Tell me something... that charming

pair of Jacob sheep... did they really die?

Sam: No, my Lord. All the stink work was

done by a pair of highly trained stand-in

sheep. No suffering was involved at all.

Judge: I am glad to hear it. I often won-

dered. Carry on!

The case continues.

THE TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE HEARS ANOTHER WITNESS



Bug foreseen

MUCH has been and will be written on the subject of the "Millennium Bug". In due course the hunt for scapegoats will commence.

Of course, thoughtful programmers have understood the issue ever since they began to store dates in computers. I certainly remember discussing it with colleagues in the early 1980s, and the plot of Arthur C Clarke's 1990 novel *The Ghost from the Grand Banks* (about raising of the *Titanic*) included an economic collapse caused by the bug.

But perhaps that was the problem: to talk too openly about the year 2000 would not have been a wise career move. Managers would assume you were either some sad nerd who read science fiction novels or a crazed eco-fanatic with delusions about the ozone layer, or just a pedantic perfectionist with no grasp of business realities.

Second, he argues that the failure of the significant fiscal tightening introduced in the July 1997 Budget to slow domestic demand "should be a salutary lesson to stanch believers in fine tuning". In fact, this can be attributed to bugs in the system and the fact that the fiscal tightening, although large, was not well targeted on the consumer.

Third, he states that "cuts in corporation and business taxation are intended to boost the level of business investment in the UK", which the Treasury has rightly said is inadequate. In fact, the net effect of the 1998 Budget will be to raise the corporate tax burden from next year by around £1bn per annum. This comes on top of the removal of dividend tax credits for pension funds last year, which increased the corporate cost of capital. All these measures, although justifiable from a long-term perspective, will tend to reduce total UK corporate investment over the next few years.

Fourth, he refers to the software fault which, with exquisite and correct logic, is going to hold back from next year the crashing of the world's computers until 31 December 2000. It is, of course, the Pedantic Millennium Bug.

MICHAEL DINES
London SW13

Tight money

I AGREE with Gavyn Davies's overall conclusion that the Budget was a step in the right direction (Business Comment, 23 March), but on three points he overstates his case.

First, he criticises the Bank of England's "puzzling failure to pursue a firm domestic monetary stance since the election". In fact,

LETTERS

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Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Cost of disability

VIRTUALLY all the discussion of disability, whether by official spokesman or by unofficial commentators, misses the point. What most of us need is not a higher income, whether from allowances or from salaries, but a better opportunity to lead a normal life.

For example, my disability living allowance doesn't help me to do my job, because the obstacles are not financial but physical. It is difficult and often impossible for me to use public streets and public transport, buildings and offices, and so on, because they have little or no wheelchair access.

Despite the inevitable cries of protest from pressure groups and political sects, the best way forward would be a combination of radical reform of the clumsy system of benefits, so that they would be based on genuine need and subject to reasonable tax, and of a real programme of providing a decent environment to live and work in.

NICOLAS WALTER
London NW1

National games

I AM surprised that Lord Gordon of Strathblane (letter, 25 March) cannot see the difference between Premier League football - essentially played between local teams even if some have wider support - and Test cricket, which, as an international contest, still carries a significant weight of national pride and interest from a great many who are not regular followers of cricket.

There will be many like myself who do not wish to be blackmailed into subscribing to cable or satellite channels, or who cannot afford to do so. But the real issue here is the place in our national life of a unique and remarkable game. Public service broadcasting has a symbolic significance as well as the practical one of providing access to the widest possible audience. By placing events which rarely involve national players above events involving our national team, Lord Gordon's Advisory Group is saying something about cricket which will do nothing to further its cause or raise standards of play.

No doubt many, including the England and Wales Cricket Board, will point to the large sums of money that will be drawn into the game from satellite broadcasting, but there are problems with cricket in this country which cannot be solved merely by money.

JOHN BURCHELL
Old Coulsdon, Surrey

ance as well as the practical one of providing access to the widest possible audience. By placing events which rarely involve national players above events involving our national team, Lord Gordon's Advisory Group is saying something about cricket which will do nothing to further its cause or raise standards of play.

As Edmund Burke said: "Persons nurtured in office [that is, in the law and politics] do admirably well, as long as things go in their common order; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out,

when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give."

What guarantee can the Government give us that the "greater knowledge of mankind" available in the present House of Lords will not be replaced by the more narrow view of "office holders"?

A F STOBART
Ludlow,
Shropshire

Why read?

ANNE BARNES, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, no less, says "the point of reading is to enjoy a good story" ("Tough words to test our children", 21 March).

What happened to the exchange of ideas, development of argument etc, or have teachers of English relegated to the story corner in the reception class?

M K FINN

John Prescott, saviour of rural England? Don't laugh



FIONA REYNOLDS
ON SAVING THE GREENBELT

ARE YOU shocked by this week's news that huge numbers of houses are to be built on the south-east's precious green countryside? You shouldn't be. Despite John Prescott's recent change of policy on housing and urban developments, we are still trapped in an economic system that favours development on fresh greenfield sites rather than restoring our cities. Until this policy changes, too, both town and country will continue to suffer.

We can get much more housing into our urban areas than we have done for the past few decades. Mr Prescott has set an initial target of at least 60 per cent of all new homes to go there - better than the 50 per cent we have been managing, but not as good as the three-quarters some think is feasible.

Is it? Yes: and we can rebuild decent housing in our towns and cities without returning to the horrors of tower blocks, or wiping out precious urban open spaces. We can do it by cleaning up abandoned urban land and restoring run-down buildings. But - and here comes the catch - none of this will be possible without a whole new approach to policy, investment and the economics which drive change.

Developers and many of their customers still much prefer greenfield sites. The land is clean and uncluttered by rubble or obsolete buildings. You can get plant and materials there easily. And the final product has all the advantages of shiny newness. Every week, according to new evidence, 1,700 more people leave cities and towns for the country, than go in the other direction.

Many of them are simply searching for a better life, in a cleaner, nicer area. Businesses are engaged in the same trek from the inner cities to their fringes. Not only are these allowed by local authorities, they are marked as the "in" places to work. We are all living even more car-dependent lifestyles, commuting further between home, work and school, leisure and shopping-venues.

But politicians are noticing. When John Prescott returned from Kyoto, where he helped negotiate the first-ever cut in CO₂ emissions by the western world, the irony of what was happening at home seems to have struck him. He saw that we were locked into a "predict and provide" approach: first predict household growth and then provide land for houses to meet those projects, without really questioning the numbers.

In no other area of public policy are we doing the same. Of course, if you build new houses in attractive places they will be occupied in preference to those in run-down areas. Yet, we plan for the future as if it has to be just like the past - even to the extent of assuming that tens of thousands of people will (and should) continue to leave urban areas every decade. Remorselessly, that leads to the destruction of much of the last of green England.

So, his new policy, of abandoning the "pre-

dict and provide" approach and setting a target for more new housing is a significant improvement. But it is not enough. The key economic signals have not changed.

For example, we pay VAT on refurbishment and repair but not on new housing. That means that it is still more expensive to reclaim and to restore previously developed land than to develop a greenfield site. The prestige associated with out-of-town development persists - local authorities and property developers still market pristine business parks covered with shiny iron sheds on the bypass in preference to urban locations. And people are still leaving urban areas - taking with them entrepreneurial skills, innovation and enthusiasm, and leaving behind those who have neither the choice about where they live nor the resources to improve their own environment.

There is so much that has to change - and fast, if we are not to compound the ills of the past. Towns and cities are the heart of modern society and the places still, where nearly 80 per cent of us live. Yet, too many people are leaving there as if it on sufferance.

I am not saying that, therefore, we should be forcing all new building onto empty urban sites. In some places this does need to happen - there are sites, long vacated by heavy industry that could provide homes and other facilities for many thousands of people. But we should imagine the remaking of our cities as a continuous process - a bedraggled Victorian terrace being restored for housing and local shops, a factory site turning into a community centre with small workshops, an old school becoming a workplace for an IT company, a church being used for a children's nursery and arts centre, offices built for a market which never arrived being converted into flats for the elderly, new houses and business units being constructed on wasteland.

This is, perhaps, the most sustainable industry it is possible to imagine - it will go on forever, and we need it to: continually reviving and restoring what is useful from the past but also providing for new communities and the infrastructure they need. This is the mission Lord Rogers's task force, set up by John Prescott, needs to lead: not just totting up an inventory of empty sites, but championing the cause of regeneration. With the passing of the "smokestack" industries, we do not need to separate homes and workspaces. We can plan anew for communities with a high range and quality of services within walking distance.

So, Prescott's vision of an "urban renaissance" is absolutely right and necessary. We really have no choice but to provide towns and cities where people can live rich, rewarding lives in ways that are not dependent on long car journeys, the consumption of huge amounts of natural resources (including land) and which maximise the benefits that can be provided through mass provision of public transport, the arts, leisure services and other facilities.

If it seems like reinventing the wheel, then that is an urgently needed task. Restoring city life is one way of avoiding the emerging gulf between town and country. The needs of town and country remain different, and should be celebrated as such. The urban renaissance offers the chance to meet them without imposing uniformity or standardised solutions.

But this is the beginning of an historic argument, not a finished deal. Mr Prescott needs to convince his colleagues to provide the economic framework and services which will help the urban renaissance to take real and enduring shape. Only then will the endless turf wars between shrinking green Britain and remorseless suburban sprawl end. Can Labour deliver?

Fiona Reynolds runs the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

DISRAELI IS back in fashion. William Hague spent quite a lot of his weekend speech in Harrogate trying to rehabilitate him - and particularly to remind Britain that Dizzy's most famous and most posthumously over-worked, notion of "one nation" was originally a Tory one.

But Disraeli is as Disraeli did. And, in fact, Hague is in danger of ignoring the lessons of one of the great Tory's most stunning electoral coups. The issue is Labour's programme of constitutional reform; and the Tories are at severe risk of missing a historic opportunity.

I mean historic. In 1867, Lord Derby's Tory administration spectacularly trumped the Liberals at Disraeli's instigation by doubling the franchise. The Conservatives won the next election and Disraeli became Prime Minister. He out-radicalised the radicals. Could it happen again?

Last week, the Shadow Cabinet held its first lengthy - a full three hours, according to those who took part - discussion of what to do about Lords reform. It considered a proposal which was repeatedly referred to during the debate as the "Disraeli option". And then, for the time being at least, rejected it.

In this case, the "Disraeli option" would have been for the Tories similarly to trump the Blair government by coming up with their own proposals for an elected second chamber. That would have meant unequivocal

accepting that the Government was going to abolish hereditary peers - a big admission - but that the party now had a real chance to open serious negotiations about the introduction of an elected second chamber.

This had been proposed in a newspaper article that very week by the backbencher Andrew Tyrie. One attraction was that Labour would have had to negotiate. If ministers were serious about their ambitions for more than an appointed Upper House - the "Superquango" their critics accuse them of planning - then they could hardly refuse the Tyre offer of talks, if only to overcome the fiendish complexities of legislating for an elected second chamber. And if ministers were not serious, then they would be exposed. The choice would be seen to be, as Tyre had put it, between "Labour quangocracy and Tory democracy".

Instead of embracing this strategy, however, the Shadow Cabinet allowed Lord Cranborne, the Tory Leader in the Lords, to continue his present tactics. Anything else, it was feared, would lead to a Tory split.

At first glance, the current plan looks rather similar to what Tyre was suggesting. In reality it is nothing of the kind. Officially, Lord Cranborne wants the Government to table detailed proposals on an elected Upper House before deciding

Why I read, watched, listened - and then passed *Lolita* for cinemas

ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH
BRITAIN'S NEW FILM CENSOR

I COULD have wished for an easier task as the new president of the British Board of Film Classification than having to make a decision about *Lolita*, an adaptation of Nabokov's novel in which Jeremy Irons plays Humbert, the schoolgirl's middle-aged lover.

But I started at the beginning - by re-reading the novel. It is more shocking today than it was when first published in 1959, because the widespread incidence of paedophilia was then unknown. Nobody could forget the theme, if only because the word, "Lolita" has entered the language; the Oxford Dictionary defines a "Lolita" as a "sexually precocious schoolgirl".

Yet, during the 30 years that had passed since I first read it, my memory had become blurred. I had forgotten the famous opening line which Irons speaks so well in the film: "Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin. My soul." Nor did I remember Nabokov's careful, if lyrical definition of a nymphet, the sole object of Humbert's sexual desires: "Between the age limits of nine and 14 there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travellers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature, which is not human but nymphic (that is, demoniac)."

In fact, those two passages, taken from the opening pages of the novel, encapsulate the main issues for classification. "Fire of my loins" is the first indication of the erotic charge that runs powerfully through the novel and the film. But note that the phrase is immediately followed by the reference to sin.

In innumerable ways, the doomed, mutually destructive, criminal nature of the liaison is repeatedly marked. The age of Lolita is important, too. In the novel, she is 12 and a half. In Stanley Kubrick's earlier version with James Mason as Humbert, Lolita looked 16 to 17 years old. And finally, there is the description of paedophiles as "bewitched travellers" and the parenthesis "demoniac".

to the novel, except in one important respect. Adrian Lyne, the director, has raised the age of *Lolita* to 14 (played by a 15-year-old actress with a 19-year-old body double used where necessary). This can have a dangerous, ratchet effect. The closer Lolita appears to approach full sexual development, the more natural Humbert's infatuation is likely to seem. Added to which, the film is full of seductive delights. Irons is perfect as the sophisticated, sardonic, self-aware Humbert; the atmosphere of late 1940s America is wonderfully recreated and the music is suitably romantic.

So, how did we deal with all that? When I took up my part-time appointment at the beginning of the year, the Board's

or so, will be asked to prepare an analysis.

What, then, is the role of the president? Cinema classification is done in the names of the president and of the director - our signatures flash up briefly as the certificate is displayed on the screen.

As "responsible authorities" in law, we are in a similar position to a newspaper editor. You are legally responsible but you cannot see everything.

Over the years, the Board has developed principles of classification, but the starting point is always the same: why should this film for the cinema or video work not have a "U" or universal certificate? Each successive restriction, "parental guidance", "suitable for persons of 12 years and over" and so on,

asked the examiners what would have made them unanimous that the film should be banned.

Restrictions depend on the notion of harm - harm to children and young people, harm to society generally. On *Lolita*, we were grappling with problems such as: had the film's pleasures been set up in too powerful a way? In other words, did we empathise with Humbert or take the story for the cautionary tale it seems to be? Is the critical comment on Humbert's behaviour strong enough to be heard above the overt messages that there is a "paradise" in a child's sexuality? But they, with equal politeness, refused to be budged from their opinion that it would not do so. The police told me that paedophiles sexualise images of all kinds, some of which may appear more or less harmless to the rest of us, such as pictures taken from sales catalogues.

All the time, the central problem loomed over us: was the risk that paedophile behaviour would be encouraged so great that the film should be banned?

Finally, the decision: pass at "18". Put out a press release. "Unlike to encourage paedophile behaviour or put children at risk... the film, like the book, abounds with indications that the breaching of what is a necessary social taboo is wrong... the new *Lolita* is a challenging and compassionate treatment of an established literary classic which adult cinema goers have a right to judge for themselves." Wait for the media storm to break. And wait for the film to open and see whether people think we were right.

THE INDEPENDENT

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How the Tories could outflank Labour



DONALD MACINTYRE
ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS

DISRAELI IS back in fashion. William Hague spent quite a lot of his weekend speech in Harrogate trying to rehabilitate him - and particularly to remind Britain that Dizzy's most famous and most posthumously over-worked, notion of "one nation" was originally a Tory one.

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I mean historic. In 1867, Lord Derby's Tory administration spectacularly trumped the Liberals at Disraeli's instigation by doubling the franchise. The Conservatives won the next election and Disraeli became Prime Minister. He out-radicalised the radicals. Could it happen again?

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In reality it is nothing of the kind. Officially, Lord Cranborne wants the Government to table detailed proposals on an elected Upper House before deciding

whether some form of cross-party negotiation would be worthwhile. The private talks he has been holding with Lord Richard - led by the Tories - reinforce the impression of co-operation.

Officially, though, it looks increasingly as if this is simply a delaying tactic which would give the Tories in the Lords some cover for opposing the abolition of hereditary peers. If the Government did produce its paper, then Lord Cranborne

would, after due time, produce his own riposte. And so on, for goodness knows how long.

The problem of this tactic is that the Government will certainly abolish hereditary peers in the next session anyway. The Labour manifesto was carefully worded to ensure it had a mandate to make that change, irrespective of any further move to an elected chamber.

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The risks for Hague of adopting the reformist option are much less than they were in 1867 for Disraeli, who inevitably increased the numbers of Liberal as well as the 1867 Act? Why, a certain Lord Cranborne, of course.

Ferdinand Porsche

THERE'S something eerily precise about the passing away of Ferdinand Porsche. For it is exactly 50 years since the first sports car bearing his name rolled into life in a remote former cowshed in Gmünd, in Carinthia, Austria. And his death comes just days before a major retrospective of some 30 Porsche vehicles opens at the Design Museum in London.

Actually, "rattle" isn't a word associated with today's sleek and purring Porsche supercars, which start in Britain at £34,000. Back then, however, the hand-made Porsche 356 – its name derived from its design project number – shared its brazen exhaust note with the air-cooled Volkswagen Beetle on which the little sports car, looking for all the world like an upturned tin bath, was closely based. But there was method in its design madness: its extremely low lines and aerodynamic shape gave it a performance that belied its diminutive size.

In the five decades since, "Ferry" Porsche nurtured his organisation's extraordinary growth with the fatherly care of a Kew Gardens nurseryman, so that it is now, perhaps, the finest "marque" in the world. In 1948 Porsche thought it could sell 50 sports cars a year. In July 1996 the millionth Porsche streaked off the production line.

Ferry Porsche's photograph – usually showing him in a checked jacket – and signature appeared on the frontispiece of Porsche brochures for 30 years, yet he allegedly lived a modest lifestyle: in stark contrast to his customers. His secret lay in constantly and painstakingly refining the firm's core design of an air-cooled, rear-engined sports car. This meant that racing versions of the company's cars were so reliable they came

to dominate long-distance endurance races like the Le Mans 24 hours. Porsche has won the event more times than any other maker, in 1983, taking the first eight places. In 1986 a Porsche 959 was the first sports car to win the gruelling Paris Dakar rally. It was just one of some 22,000 race victories for the cars.

Their road cars are as consistently dependable and solid as any German family saloon, yet possess the charisma that makes enthusiastic drivers bristle with excitement. It is a compromise that rivals from Lotus to Ferrari still struggle to emulate, and it has made Porsche a byword for sports-car excellence. They are not the easiest cars to drive, the weight bias at the rear often catching out the novice. To master a classic rear-engined Porsche, however, is to pass a sort of initiation ceremony.

The company could make other cars. Its front-engined, V8-powered 928 is still the only sports car ever to have scooped the Car of the Year award, in 1978. Recently, however, the firm has returned to its roots with the rear-engined Boxster, and its sales are rocketing.

Ferry Porsche was born in 1909. His father, also Ferdinand Porsche, was one of Europe's leading automotive boffins. He had created a novel electric car in 1900, the Lohner-Porsche, with electric hubs driving the front wheels, an early example of his extraordinary lateral thinking and obsession with precision, and was appointed chief engineer at Austro-Daimler in 1906, and at Mercedes-Benz in 1923.

It was here that Ferdinand senior perfected the supercharged engine that made the Mercedes-Benz SSK a formidable Le Mans contender; the technology later transferred neatly to Messerschmitt



Porsche: his cars possess a charisma that makes enthusiastic drivers bristle with excitement

Photograph: AFP

bombers in readiness for the Second World War.

For Herr Porsche was a Nazi party member. After setting up his own design consultancy in Stuttgart in 1931, his services were called upon to uphold German honour on the race-track, and the Porsche-designed 16-cylinder Auto Union C-type grand prix cars went on to dominate racing events throughout the 1930s.

Young Ferry drove his first car aged 10, and soon joined his father's business. Together, they worked on a series of prototypes which led to the birth of another Hitler dreamchild: initially called the Kraft Durch Freude, meaning "strength through joy", it ended up as plain Volks Wagen – "people's car".

Although the Second World War got in the way, the Volks

Wagen eventually started production under the auspices of British troops in 1945. Just 1,785 were made that year, and it was scorned by a British motor industry commission. As the Volkswagen Beetle, however, it became the best-selling car of all time.

The Porsche clan returned to Austria in 1944, and set up shop with plans to design tractors. Early 356 production was farmed out to local contractors but by 1950 Porsche had returned to Stuttgart. The German-built 356, largely inspired by Ferry Porsche's desire to create a cheap fun car, began to win hearts and races, and in 1951, the year the old man died, Porsche had the temerity to show a car at the Earl's Court motor show in London.

But people knew a good

thing when they saw it, and 77,361 356s were sold by 1965. By then, the new Porsche 911 had been launched, designed by Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, one of Ferry's four sons. A much-modified 911 is still on sale today.

In 1965 Ferry Porsche gained an honorary doctorate in engineering from the Technical University of Vienna. He took the family firm public in 1972, opening a large new research centre at Weissach the same year. In 1990 he became honorary chairman, a post he held until his death.

Throughout the boom-and-bust era of the 1980s, he steered the company, doggedly resisting mergers, and indeed hiring out his company's design expertise to rivals like Audi and Mercedes. When times were good,

he found ways to expand: the cheaper Porsche 924, for instance, used an engine from VW van, and when Boxster demand began to outstrip supply, Ferry found a factory in Finland to make extra ones – to the consternation of his German workforce.

Ferry Porsche always retained his links with Austria, spending his final days at a holiday home in the mountains that he had bought in the 1930s. His nephew Ferdinand Piech today heads Volkswagen-Audi.

Giles Chapman

Ferdinand Anton Ernst Porsche, engineer and businessman: born Wiener Neustadt, Austria 19 September 1909; married 1933 Dorothea Reitz (died 1993; four sons); died Zell am See, Austria 27 March 1998.

Jim Poole

JIM POOLE was the only male in the fourth generation of a show-business family which created a highly successful travelling attraction, a precursor of the cinema, called the Myriorama. Poole made his own mark by establishing the Cameo cinema as a notable outlet for top quality foreign films in his home town of Edinburgh. He also became president in 1968-69 of the powerful Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association.

Back in 1948, the Cameo was the King's, which Poole recalled in a 1996 interview as "a third-run cinema in a very decrepit state, but, if you got past

the grime and the rather peculiar green and yellow decoration, the Victorian architecture of the building was pretty good". Poole had to patch a leaking roof and dispatch the rats population before re-launching it as the Cameo in 1949 against his father's advice.

He was inspired not only by the success of the specialised programming at the Cosmo in Glasgow but by the low rates for which continental films could then be hired. He had huge successes with Jacques Tati's comedies among others and in 1978, when the big circuits spurned

Annie Hall, played the Woody

Allen comedy for a grand total of 16 weeks. He also served on the council of the Edinburgh Film Festival, which used the Cameo for screenings.

By the time Jim Poole was born, the Myriorama had been largely replaced by moving pictures. But it lasted until the talkies came in 1928 – in its final years being revived as a Christmas treat. Poole described it as "a series of large moving canvases and tableaux". Tall pools of panoramic paintings were slowly extended across the full width of the stage while a lecturer explained the significance of each view to the accompaniment of sound effects.

Wars and disasters were highly popular subjects. "The Loss of the Titanic" held the box-office take – it was the greatest success in our Myriorama history," declared Poole. Paintings showed the departure from Liverpool, the view of the Needles lighthouse, the crash into the iceberg, the rockets, the lifeboats, and the rescue of survivors.

Educated at Durham, Poole was trained in every aspect of the cinema business before, at the age of 21, being put in charge of his father's newly built Regent in Aberdeen which he put on the map with some lively publicity stunts. It was sold to Odeon and renamed, but he returned as guest of honour at the 50th anniversary in 1982.

The Poole circuit included the sleek new Roxy in the Edinburgh suburb of Gorgie, which opened in 1937 and succumbed to bingo in 1963, plus the Hippodrome, Gloucester, King's Hall, Stourbridge, and Coliseum, Cheltenham. Poole's also retained the cavernous Odium Hall on Edinburgh's Castle Terrace which housed the circuit headquarters in its Room 18.

In contrast to the Cameo, the Synod Hall specialised in X-certificate horror double bills and

was still highly profitable when in 1965 the City Council forced its closure and rapid demolition for a new opera house – the site remained vacant for years.

The Cameo was the last of the Poole cinemas, closed when he retired in September 1982, but subsequently re-opened under new management and beautifully restored, still showing specialised films with two new mini-cinemas attached.

Allen Eyles

John Kennedy Stafford Poole, film exhibitor: born 7 July 1911; married 1936 Iris Sterckx (three daughters); died 16 January 1998.

He was one of the few Pales-

tinians. "In 1972 I said we must challenge Israel with peace and not war and there will be no solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict until we take the road to peace. These things were not accepted at the time," he recalled recently.

Freij died the day before the Palestinians commemorate Israeli land expropriation with Land Day. From his Bethlehem home, Freij had a clear view of the Gilo Jewish settlement, built above the Palestinian village of Beit Jala on expropriated land.

Felix Corley

Elias Freij, politician: born Bethlehem, Palestine 1916; Mayor of Bethlehem 1972-97; Minister of Tourism, Palestine 1994-97; married (six children); died Amman, Jordan 29 March 1998.

Kate Cruise O'Brien

KATE CRUISE O'BRIEN emerged on to the lively Irish writing scene of the Seventies with an immediate impact, winning the Hennessy Literary Award in 1971 when just 22 with one of her first short stories.

After studying English at Trinity College Dublin, where she also took a diploma in education, she soon married. She initially planned a career in

teaching but instead opened a crèche for children of working mothers while bringing up her son Alexander.

Her first book, *Gift Horse*, published in 1979, also won an award and she followed this in the early 1980s by branching out into newspaper work with a column in the *Irish Independent*.

A second career opened in book publishing when several

years later she joined Poolbeg, one of a clutch of small but prolific Irish literary houses. Working alongside the enthusiastic publisher Phil MacDermott, she became editorial director and won wide respect through her discerning eye for emerging new writers.

MacDermott was full of praise for the contribution of his new lieutenant, whose contri-

bution effectively resurrected a company that by his own admission had wandered after its major 1983 success with *The Boss*, Joe Joyce and Peter Murch's classic warts-and-all biography of Charles Haughey. Joyce observed with admiration how O'Brien "was able to come up with a clutch of blockbusters as if from nowhere". Several were sold on for wider paper-back distribution through British and international publishers.

Among her finds was Marian Keyes, best-selling author of *Water Melons* and *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married*. She praised O'Brien's unwillingness to allow her any "soft options" in her story-telling. Charting in one work the painful experience of recovery from addiction, Keyes recalled in the *Irish Times*, "I

begged to be absolved from it, but Kate was quite matter of fact. 'You've got to write the book that wants to be written,' she kept saying."

MacDermott described O'Brien as "irreplaceable, a unique and wonderful talent". She was the daughter of the formidable and controversial diplomat, journalist and author Conor Cruise O'Brien, recalled in the *Irish Times*, "I

one-time editor-in-chief of the *Observer* and recently adviser to the small UK Unionist Party in Northern Ireland. Her mother is the Derry-born Christine Foster.

Alan Murdoch

Kate Cruise O'Brien, writer and publisher: born Dublin 1948; married 1971 Joseph Kearney (one son); died Dublin 26 March 1998.

DEATHS
DUNLOP: On 28 March, at St Thomas' Nursing Home, Basingstoke, peacefully, after a long illness. Peter Augustus Dunlop, director of Dunlop Tyres Ltd, London, and his wife, Louise, proud "Papa" of Freddy and Tom, Co-Founders of Dunlop. Family flowers only but donations, if desired, to Crisis (for the homeless) or Cancer Research UK. Interment at St. Peter's Cemetery, Newbury RG14 1HA. Funeral Monday 6 April at 2.30pm at Douai Chapel, Woolhampton.

FISHER: Bridget Maureen (Biddy), nee Acheson, wife of the late Canon John H. W. Fisher, of Berkeley and Rockhampton, on Thursday 27 March 1998. Private cremation. Thanks and love to all friends at the service on Friday 3 April at St Oswald's Church, Rockhampton. Flowers in Lent, but donations may be made in aid of Berkley and Rockhampton Churches, St Crispins & Goscombe Funeral Services, Chipping Norton, The Chipping Norton Crematorium, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, and the Royal British Legion.

HICKS: David Nightingale, died Sunday afternoon, 29 March 1998, in his 70th year after a mercifully short fight against cancer. Please, if you are in bed looking over him, do not be disturbed by his exerting family. Funeral this Saturday, 4 April, 11.30am, at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Fawdon, Oxfordshire. Memorial Service in London to follow in early summer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

MAYNARD: Joan. Born 5 July 1921, died 27 March 1998, aged 76. Funeral 2pm, Friday 3 April. Flowers to 23a, Rector's Croft, 23 Cundall Avenue, Aspatria, North Cumbria, CA18 1SD. Memorial Monday 6 April at 2.30pm at Douai Chapel, Woolhampton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS
Antec International Ltd v South Western Chicks (Warren) Ltd; Chancery Division (Michael Hart QC, sitting as a deputy judge of the Chancery Division) 27 March 1998

THE WORDS "farm fluid" in the name of an agricultural disinfectant were not merely descriptive but were capable of being appropriated as a trade name, and their use in the name of a rival product, according to the court.

The plaintiff, Antec International Ltd, succeeded in an action for passing off against the defendant, South Western Chicks (Warren) Ltd.

The plaintiff had for many years manufactured and sold an agricultural disinfectant using the brand name "Antec Farm Fluid". At the 1996 Stoneleigh agricultural show the defendant had advertised a competing

agricultural disinfectant under the name "Super Farm Fluid", and was subsequently found to be marketing the product as "SWC Super Farm Fluid". The plaintiff brought an action for passing off, and obtained an interlocutory injunction.

Michael Hart QC said that the parties were at issue on each of the elements of the "classical trinity" of the tort of passing off, namely, whether the plaintiff had acquired goodwill in the name "Farm Fluid", the defendant contending that the term by itself was so generally descriptive that it had not acquired any secondary connotation in which goodwill could subsist; whether there had been any misrepresentation

leading to confusion, or whether the addition of the prefixes "SWC" and "Super" to the defendant's product sufficed to dispel any potential confusion; and whether more minimal damage had been or would be likely to be caused to the plaintiff's goodwill.

There was no controversy about the basic facts. The plaintiff made and sold, *inter alia*, disinfectants for use on farms. It was the market leader in England in that field. The name "Farm Fluid" had first been used as a name by Jeys plc. In 1976 the plaintiff had acquired from Jeys plc the business of Jeys Animal Health Division, which had included the making and selling of "Jeys Farm Fluid". The plaintiff had continued to make and sell that product, but from 1979 onward had marketed and sold it as "Antec Farm Fluid", and from 1985 as "Antec Farm Fluid".

The unchallenged evidence of the plaintiff established conclusively that the words "Farm Fluid" had come to be associated in the minds of the relevant section of the public (i.e. farmers) with the Antec product, but the defendant contended that the words were so generally descriptive that they could not serve, or be taken in law as serving, to distinguish the Antec product in the minds of the relevant section of the public from other similar products.

The courts would be very slow to intervene to protect a trade name which was simply descriptive. Whilst it was true that the words "farm" and "fluid" were common English words, the words "farm fluid" in conjunction, however, were not. In order to demonstrate that they were simply descriptive

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

President, President of the Friends of the V.A., attended a reception for the British Legion Appeal at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London SW1.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, London.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, A.A. Award, attends the "Medieval" Ball, The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW1.

The Duke of Kent, President, the Automobile Association, attends an informal dinner at the Royal Automobile Club, London SW1.

Authority Launch Royal Navy, London E1.

18/OBITUARIES

Elias Freij

ELIAS FREIJ, the veteran mayor of Bethlehem, served his home town under British, Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian rule. He became the standard-bearer of Palestinian moderation and an advocate of Palestinian-Israeli understanding and coexistence at a time of great hostility between the two sides.

Freij's 25 years at the helm of Bethlehem municipality were enough to test the patience of a saint, trying to operate under constant Israeli pressure and harassment. The short, round Freij was also a tireless advocate for his town, travelling the world to meet its problems before the international community and to remind Bethlehem exiles as far away as the United States and South America to retain close links with home.

Once a year, at Christmas, the world focused on Bethlehem as thousands of pilgrims converged on the Church of the Nativity in Manger Square. Freij always tried to use the occasion to boost the town's profile. During the intifada, he was forced to cancel the traditional Christmas reception. As a Greek Orthodox Christian, Freij expressed concern about the dwindling Christian population of the town of 50,000, where Muslims now outnumber Christians two to one. Accelerating emigration has reduced the Christians in the West Bank to just 3 per cent of Palestinians, though last year Yasser Arafat decreed that Bethlehem will always have a Christian majority.

Born in Bethlehem in 1918 in a family that traced its presence there back 500 years, Freij graduated from the British-run Bishop Gobat School in Jerusalem in 1940. In the early 1950s he headed the local

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19/BUSINESS

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Chinese premier's visit awakens bitter memories

By Terry Macalister

THE CHINESE PREMIER, Zhu Rongji, arrives in London today with British business leaders lobbying furiously to win access to the most populous market in the world.

Royal & Sun Alliance hopes to become the first UK insurer to gain approval to operate in China, while Burmah Castrol yesterday announced new plans for expansion in the region.

But not everyone thinks China is the land of opportunity. It

is also one of danger, according to Richard Gosling, a London-based entrepreneur. He invested millions of pounds only to find himself cheated out of money and legal judgements ignored.

He told *The Independent* yesterday: "When I first became involved I thought I was dealing with a normal commercial environment. By the end it was like a James Bond movie with car chases and people following me on foot round London."

That was not his view 10 years ago. Then Mr Gosling's

Zoneheath Associates was looking for a low-cost facility to produce printed-circuit boards for a new generation of car alarms.

Mr Gosling had potential contracts for equipment from Selmar Alarms when he was introduced to Zhai Zhi Ming, a representative from China Tianjin International Economic and Technical Co-operative Corp (CTIETCC).

This Chinese company is the

14th-largest state-owned corporation in China and its senior

management were all government officials. It had London of

fices in the commercial office of the Chinese embassy.

Mr Gosling was invited to Tianjin where he was feted by the local major. Zoneheath signed a joint venture agreement with CTIETCC and immediately invested £250,000 to help re-qualify one of CTIETCC's factories for producing circuit boards. Zoneheath also entered into a second deal to produce foot-pumps for cars.

But time passed and no circuit boards materialised. A consignment of foot-pumps arrived four months after they were sup-

plied to. Their quality made them unsaleable.

Alarmed at the lack of progress, Mr Gosling told CTIETCC he wanted to come over to Tianjin and discuss the issue, but was told such a visit was inappropriate. After further pestering Mr Gosling realised he had been "stuffed". He asked the British Foreign Office for help and was told by Richard Headlam, the then trade minister, that he would raise the issue on a forthcoming visit. He didn't.

In desperation Mr Gosling started High Court proceedings

against the Chinese for breach of contract. In January 1992 he won his case and by September had compensation costs with interest awarded in his favour.

But the judgment was ignored and Mr Gosling found himself being forced to hire lawyers in the UK and Far East in a bid to seize CTIETCC's assets.

Gosling visited Beijing for further talks with CTIETCC. He was warned by the British embassy there not to leave his hotel alone. Mr Gosling returned to London with only promises.

The picture only began to

change when Wilde Sapte, the law firm, obtained a winding up order against CTIETCC assets in Hong Kong. CTIETCC officials told Mr Gosling they were prepared to pay up.

By September 1995, Mr Gosling had obtained enough compensation to cover the costs of hiring lawyers. But his struggle has left him feeling outraged.

He said last night: "CTIETCC officials were not governed by any legal, moral or commercial considerations. They were above the law and this has not changed."



Richard Gosling: "It was like a James Bond movie"

BMW pledges £350m new cash for Rolls

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

ROLLS-ROYCE, the luxury carmaker that has been a symbol of British prestige for nearly a century, passed into German hands yesterday.

BMW, which already owns Rover, is buying Rolls for £340m – more than double the book value ascribed to it by its present owners, Vickers. The actual cost of the deal is likely to creep upwards as Vickers expects capital investment since January to be paid for by BMW.

The German car giant promised to double the 2,600-strong workforce at Crewe, invest more than £350m and triple worldwide annual sales of Rolls and Bentleys to 6,000.

It is taking over a company whose models have been used by the rich and famous throughout the 20th century. Rolls-Royce said it was sad the company was moving out of British ownership but staff agreed that the BMW takeover was good news for the company's future.

BMW was already making engines for Rolls-Royce and was favourite to win the battle for the company once Vickers announced last autumn that it was up for sale.

Other contenders had included Germany's Volkswagen and two private consortia, including a group of Rolls-Royce owners. VW is still committed to establish a luxury car brand and is reportedly looking at resurrecting the premier "Horch" marque.

Mercedes will also be keeping a close eye on BMW's move. It is planning to launch a luxury limousine in competition with Rolls-Royce.

Vickers insisted it had got a good price for the company and had found Rolls-Royce "a good home". However, a group of enthusiasts who also bid for the company warned they would fight the proposed takeover.

The Rolls-Royce Acquisition Consortium said: "We bid more than £300m. We will top it up to BMW's bid ... we will encourage shareholders to vote against the current bid."

BMW insisted it was unlikely to lose any sleep over that. Bernd Pischetsrieder, BMW's chairman, outlined his company's likely plans for Rolls-Royce at the Geneva Motor Show earlier this month.

This included pumping in £1bn of investment in two new model lines over 10 years. Motor industry experts say the first of the new cars to emerge could be a baby Bentley based on the prototype "Java", showcased in 1994 and priced at £100,000. A BMW 5 series chassis was used in the design of the Java.

As well as producing the new Silver Seraph, the Crewe workforce currently makes the two-door Bentley Continental, R and Azure models. Worldwide Rolls-Royce sales last year reached 1,918 – 10 per cent up on the 1996 figure.

Graham Morris, chief executive of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said: "We are delighted with the news and can now look forward to the future with even greater confidence."

He added: "We know BMW very well and en-

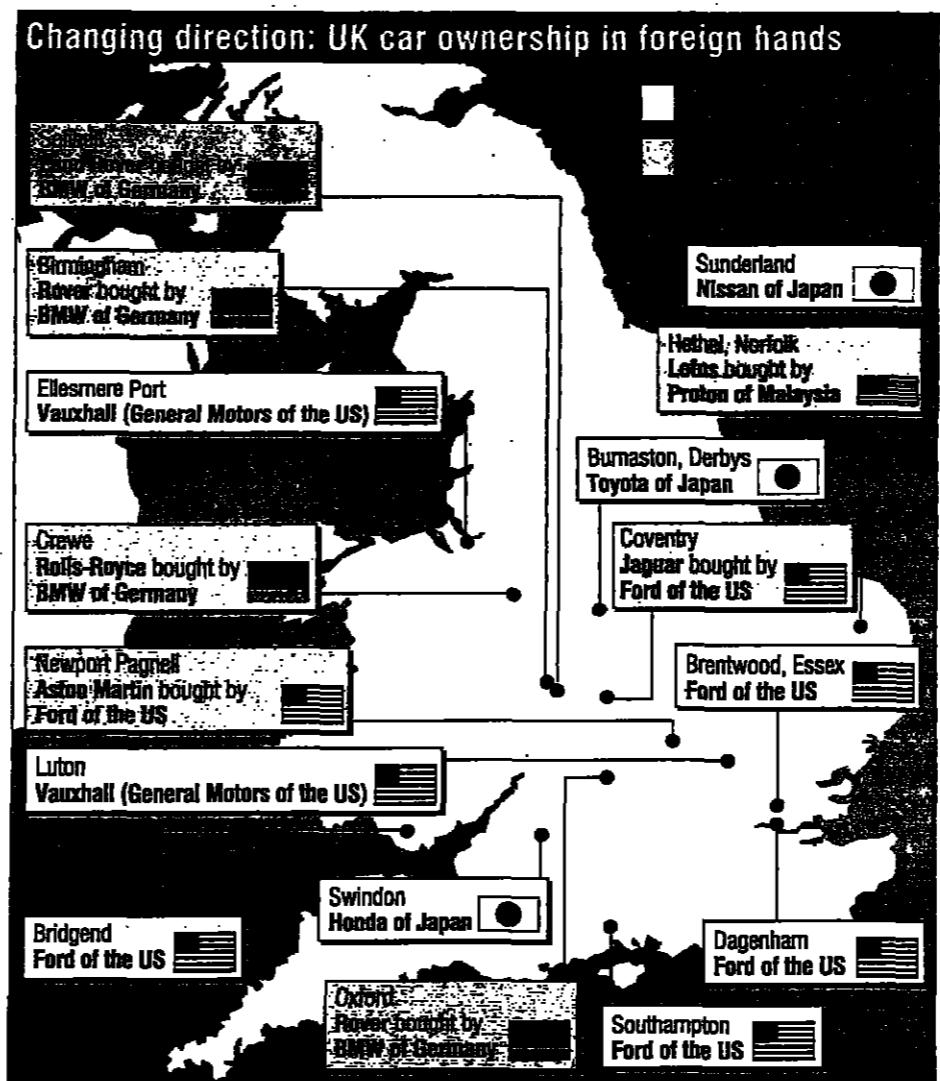
joy an excellent working relationship with them. This outcome provides the most positive commitment to the future of Rolls-Royce and Bentley in Crewe and to the security of employment of our 2,600 loyal employees."

Steve Taylor, works convenor for the Amalgamated Engineering Union which has 1,000 members at Crewe, said: "We needed long-term investment and it looks like we've got it. People

have greeted the news well this morning and are brushing up on their German."

The sale of Rolls-Royce to a foreign enterprise follows a well-established pattern. It follows Ford's acquisition of Aston Martin and Jaguar, BMW's purchase of Rover, and the purchase of Lotus by Proton of Malaysia. Only specialty carmakers such as sports-car maker TVR Engineering remain in British hands.

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Bacardi wins Dewar's in £1.15bn deal

By Andrew Yates

BACARDI-MARTINI, the Bermudan-based spirits giant, has pulled off one of the biggest deals the drinks industry has ever seen. The world's biggest rum maker has agreed to pay £1.15bn in cash for Dewar's, America's best selling whisky, and Bombay gin, the fastest growing spirits brand.

Bacardi beat off more than 20 rivals to win an auction for the two brands and the final price smashed City forecasts. Diageo stands to make a profit of £460m on the deal.

Diageo and Bombay made profits of £95m last year, after a combined marketing spend of around £70m. The deal satisfies Bacardi's craving for a leading whisky brand to go alongside its white rum, which is the biggest selling brand in the world, and furthers its ambition to become a major force in the drinks industry. It also gives the group the chance to develop Bombay Sapphire, one of the most exciting of the new spirit brands, around the world.

About £500m of the sale proceeds have already been earmarked to help pay the £2.9bn special dividend Diageo announced last year. The rest of the money will go to pay off some of the group's debts. However analysts believe that the bumper sales price is likely to lead to bring forward plans to make further returns to shareholders via a share buy back or another special dividend.

Diageo was formed last December when Guinness and Grand Metropolitan merged to create the largest drinks combine in the world. It was forced to sell the brands by June to get the green light for the blockbuster deal from the US and European competition authorities. Bacardi's acquisition will safeguard the future of Dewar's four distilleries in Scotland.

The acquisition of Dewar's is a big strategic move for Bacardi, which had annual sales of \$2.7bn (£1.6bn) and made pre-tax profits of \$234m in the 64 weeks to March 1997. George B. Reid Jr, Bacardi's president and chief executive, said: "In an industry that is consolidating rapidly to a few, very powerful players, it became clear to us that Bacardi had a unique opportunity to acquire two world-class brands."

Outlook, page 21

Decaux trumps More Group bid

By Kerry Benefield

DECAUX, the advertising giant, made good on its challenge for rival More Group yesterday, offering a bid which trumped the £466m put forward by US media conglomerate Clear Channel Communications earlier this month.

More Group withdrew its recommendation of the Clear Channel sale yesterday, advising shareholders to take no action. "We want to maximise shareholder value, but we also want to maximise certainty and deliverability," a spokesman said yesterday, adding: "We need clarification on the regulatory issues."

The offer by New Decaux, a wholly owned subsidiary of Decaux of France, yesterday valued More Group at £475m and offered a payout of 1110p per share. The offer represents a premium of 8 per cent to the Clear Channel offer, and a

35 per cent premium to the closing price of the More Group's day before Clear Channel's March 4 bid.

The combination of More Group with Decaux will generate considerable strategic and commercial benefits for both businesses by bringing together Decaux's strong presence in continental European markets and More Group's strong position in the UK and Scandinavia," Decaux said in a statement yesterday.

A spokesman for Decaux said the company had consulted with a legal team about the offer and does not expect its bid to be sidelined by any British regulatory issues. "In relation to the UK bid, there is no UK problem."

The combination of More and Decaux would have an 88 per cent share of the UK market for advertising on street furniture, but only about 24 per cent of the overall outdoor advertising market.

Mattel thwarts hostile bid for Bluebird Toys

By Kerry Benefield

MATTEL, the US toy giant, yesterday launched a £46m offer to buy Bluebird Toys, in effect thwarting the hostile £42m takeover offer initiated by Guinness Peat Group in January.

The offer by Mattel, which offers the Barbie dolls, came more than a month after Bluebird rejected a bid of 101p-a-share from GPG. The latest offer values Bluebird at 111p-a-share, which Bluebird said it accepted "in the absence of any higher offer".

A spokesman for Mattel said it would be "very surprising" if another offer were put on the table. "The market thinks this is it."

Bluebird, the maker of Polly Pocket and The Tiny Disney Collection, has been under fire for drastic profit losses in recent years. The market responded to the announcement by dropping

Bluebird's share price 3p to 111.5p. Mattel's offer represents a 30.6 per cent premium over Bluebird's closing share price of 85p a share on 16 January, the day before GPG's initial offer.

The deal was unveiled as Mattel announced it was exercising its rights to manufacture Polly Pocket in North America, which Chris Burkin, Bluebird's chief executive, said would lead to the "consequential reduction in profits to Bluebird from this vitally important product".

Later, Guinness Peat said this statement showed the deal was "onerous and prejudicial" to Bluebird. Blake Nixon, an executive director, said: "It is extraordinary that an offeree only sees fit on the 45th day of an offer period finally to inform shareholders of the existence of such prejudicial arrangements."

Bluebird's North American sales in 1996 were £15.7m, but fell to £5.8m in 1997. Polly Pocket is a key product in Blue-

Export plea for rates freeze as pound hits 10-year high

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE POUND soared yesterday to its highest level against the German mark this decade. Sterling fever on the foreign exchanges led to fresh prices from industry to the Bank of England not to raise interest rates when its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets next week.

The pound jumped from just under DM3.08 to a whisker below DM3.10, the highest since August 1989. Its index against a range of currencies rose 0.5 to 108.7. The sterling index has gained 4 per cent since the start of this year and nearly 2 per cent since the Budget.

Analysts predicted the pound would stay strong for the foreseeable future. Gerard Lyons at DKB said: "The British economy is in better shape than the Continental economies, and the pound can stay stronger for longer. We're just going to have to put up with it."

of level for the rest of the year, you can expect to see exporters starting to pull out of markets and multinationals starting to shift their production elsewhere."

Figures hinting at a slowdown in consumer spending at home, which might help the doves on the MPC win their argument again this month, had no impact on the markets. The increase in consumer credit in February was £1.1bn, down from a record £1.6bn in January. The Bank also reported a modest slowdown in the growth of M0, the narrow money measure consisting mainly of cash in circulation, fitting in with anecdotal reports of a slower pace of high street spending.

Separately, the Nationwide building society said house prices rose less rapidly in March, although they had now comfortably passed their 1989 peak. Prices rose by 0.8 per cent during the month to reach a level 12.3 per cent higher than a year earlier.

TOURIST RATES					
Australia (\$)	2.4350				
Malta (lira)	0.6442				
Netherlands (guilders)	20.99				
Belgium (francs)	61.73				
New Zealand (\$)	2.9093				
Canada (\$)	2.2230				
Denmark (kroner)	0.8679				
Norway (kroner)	2.28				
Portugal (escudos)	303.76				
Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.1814				
Singapore (\$)	2.5546				
Spain (pesetas)	253.54				
France (francs)	10.02				
Germany (marks)	3.0004				
South Africa (rand)	8.0365				
Sweden (kroner)	12.96				
Greece (drachmai)	54.63				
Hong Kong (\$)	0.24				
Ireland (pounds)	1.877				
Switzerland (francs)	2.4630				
Thailand (baht)	57.77				
Israel (shekels)	5.5763				
Turkey (lira)	389.74				
USA (\$)	1.6498				
Japan (yen)					

Buy-back bonanza for three firms' investors

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

IT WAS a bumper day for shareholders yesterday as three companies announced substantial share buy-backs. WH Smith led the way with plans for a £250m capital return following the completion of the £300m sale of Waterstone's to HMV Media. Burmah Castrol, the lubricants group, also showered its shareholders with £250m. Separately Ascot, the engineering mini-conglomerate, announced a £50m share buy-back.

Shareholders in WH Smith will receive 53.75p per share, representing a return of 10 per cent of the company's market value, or £150m. The buy-back will be effected via the issue and buy-back of B shares. At the same time where will be a consolidation of the company's share capital on the basis of nine new ordinary shares for every 10 currently held. The remainder of the capital return will be conducted through market purchase of around £100m.

The size of Smith's cash return was in line with analysts' expectations and the City drew additional comfort from the company's comments that it would consider further buy-backs. These will depend on the outcome of negotiations with Virgin over the sale of Smith's 75 per cent stake in the Virgin-Our Price music group.

"We will sell to Virgin if they are prepared to pay us a sensible price for the business," said Richard Handover, Smith's chief executive. "But we're in no great rush to do it." Smith's has an option to buy back the remainder of the business next year.

He said there were no plans for further corporate activity.

"We're just in the process of buying John Menzies and we have a lot of work to do on the existing business," Smiths shares edged up 5p to 542.5p.

Burmah Castrol plans to return not less than £250m of capital to shareholders although these plans are not expected to be executed until after April 1999. The company intends to seek shareholder approval at this year's annual general meeting to buy back up to 10 per cent of its share capital. Management will renew this power annually.

But the company is likely to wait until ACT is abolished in the spring of next year before moving ahead as this would be more tax efficient and "serve shareholders' best interests".

Tim Stevenson, the new chief executive, said the eventual figure could be higher than £250m. It is part of a strategy of balance sheet management under which the company will also redeem its small number of preference shares.

Burmah shares soared 69p to 1170p on the buyback plans plus better than expected pre-tax profits which were 7 per cent ahead at £279m.

Shares in Ascot Holdings, the engineering group run by Hamley's chairman Howard Dyer, climbed on news that the company is returning £50m to shareholders, worth around 61p per share. Ascot is seeking shareholder approval for the re-purchase of up to 10 per cent of its stock.

Mr Dyer said that trading results in the first two months of the year were ahead of 1997's and that substantial funds were being committed to organic growth. The shares rose 31.5p to 296.5p. Profits last year rose from £6m to £30m.

He said there were no plans for further corporate activity.

Pentland defends £1m payoff to directors

By Nigel Cope

TWO DIRECTORS of Pentland, the Speedo and Ellesse sportswear group, received combined payoffs of almost £1m last year.

Frank Farrant, the finance director who quit in March, received £352,000 for loss of office and was paid a further £178,000 for three months of consultancy work.

Patrick McGuigan, the chief operations director who resigned in May, received a bonus of £257,000. The two directors also made substantial gains from the exercise of share options.

Pentland defended the payments, revealed in the company's

latest annual report, saying they were part of the two directors' contractual entitlements. "They [the payments] were to the letter of the contracts and were made to people who had given good service to the company over a number of years."

Pentland received widespread criticism last year when the company appointed 33-year-old Andrew Rubin as chief executive. He is the son of Stephen Rubin, the chairman of Pentland and the majority shareholder.

The company insisted yesterday that it was acting in accordance with corporate governance guidelines. It said it had appointed a new non-

executive director and that Clinton Silver, the former Marks & Spencer director, headed up the remuneration committee. "The company has taken a number of steps to comply with best practice," a spokesman said.

Stephen Rubin's total pay was unchanged last year at £344,233. However, because of his 53 per cent stake in the company, his dividend cheque last year was £7.5m. Andrew Rubin was paid £232,000, up from £186,000 the previous year. His pay included a bonus of £75,000 plus other taxable benefits of £28,000. The increases took the total wage bill for directors to £2.5m for the year, an increase of 25 per cent.

Acheson makes materials used in electronics for televisions, computers, medical systems and telephones. It had 1997 sales of \$189m (£112.5m)

ICI pays £560m for US speciality chemicals unit

By Terry Macalister

ICI yesterday stepped up its expansion into specialty chemicals with the £560m cash purchase of US-based Acheson Industries.

The move is the second big acquisition this year for ICI, which has just spent £350m buying Williams's European Home Improvement business.

ICI, which makes Dulux paint and Polyfill cement, will combine Acheson with National Starch and Chemical, a business it bought last year.

Acheson makes materials used in electronics for televisions, computers, medical systems and telephones. It had 1997 sales of \$189m (£112.5m)

and earnings of \$46m before interest and tax.

ICI now joins Laporte, Britain's fourth biggest chemical maker, in expanding its electronics industry supply business. This industry has generated consistently higher returns than ICI's mainstay commodity chemicals.

"It's a profitable industry with long-term massive growth still to come from electronics and computers," said Philip Morris, analyst with Nikko Securities in London.

ICI first made a significant move into specialty chemicals and materials last year with the \$86m purchase of Unilever's NY divisions including Quest International and National Starch.

and earnings of \$46m before interest and tax.

The company's profits climbed by 16.6 per cent to £34.6m last year – even after a £10m provision for settling the dispute. Cargo volumes rose at both of its ports, Liverpool and Medway.

The Government now stands to make £70m – compared to less than £60m last year. Shares in the company have risen from 490p to 573p within the last year, valuing the company at more than £20.5bn.

Mersey Docks shares closed up 3p at 576.5p.

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Parliamentary Under Secretary, DfEE

Rosie Boycott,
Editor, *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*

David Brown,
Chairman, Motorola Ltd and Chair,
UFI Design and Implementation Advisory Group

Josh Hillman,
Institute for Public Policy Research

Simon Sperry,
Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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Government sells Mersey Docks stake for £70m

By Andrew Verity

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday sold its stake in the Mersey Docks and Harbour company for £70m in the first sell-off of state assets since Labour came to power.

The sale of the 14 per cent stake follows the resolution in January of a bitter, two-year dispute between 327 dockers and the company's management.

ABN Amro Rothschild, acting as adviser to the Treasury, said £70m was raised through the sale of 12.4 million shares at 565p each, which represented the mid-price on offers for the shares. The sale was oversubscribed, the company said.

The Mersey dockers were locked out in November 1995 after they went on strike in sympathy with staff at a local firm of stevedores. Since coming to power in May, the Government has resisted calls by union leaders to use its stake to intervene on behalf of dockers.

The dockers became a cause célèbre last year as football stars such as Liverpool's Robbie Fowler backed the locked-out workers. In January, Mersey Docks and Harbour spent more than £29m settling the dispute, offering the dockers a lump sum worth £28,000 each.

Trevor Furlong, the company's chief executive, said the dispute was now behind the company. He also pledged to boost an investment programme, spending £25m on a deep water berth and cold storage in Sheerness, Kent, and £10m on the Twelve Quays ferry terminal in Liverpool.

The company's profits climbed by 16.6 per cent to £34.6m last year – even after a £10m provision for settling the dispute. Cargo volumes rose at both of its ports, Liverpool and Medway.

The Government now stands to make £70m – compared to less than £60m last year. Shares in the company have risen from 490p to 573p within the last year, valuing the company at more than £20.5bn.

Mersey Docks shares closed up 3p at 576.5p.

Milk float delivers a 25% share price gain for Express Dairies



Liquid assets: A milkman unloads his empties at the West Hampstead, London, depot of Express Dairies, which yesterday enjoyed a buoyant debut on the stock market following its demerger from Northern Foods. The

shares gained more than 25 per cent from their opening price of 142p to close 40p up at 182p. Northern Foods' shares closed 78p lower at 223.5p. Analysts said the increase in Express Dairies' shares was partly due to

takeover speculation. Express Dairies is the UK's largest supplier of liquid milk and has the largest share of the doorstep delivery market, which has been suffering steady decline.

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Bava

BC flies
canary

was warned
controls'

trial claims up

chief moves

could eventually make a killing, although it could take several years to get the ball rolling.

Analysts forecast full-year profits of around £28m, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 18. Whether or not Man Utd wins the Premiership, the club remains in a league of its own financially. The share price weakness represents a good buying opportunity.

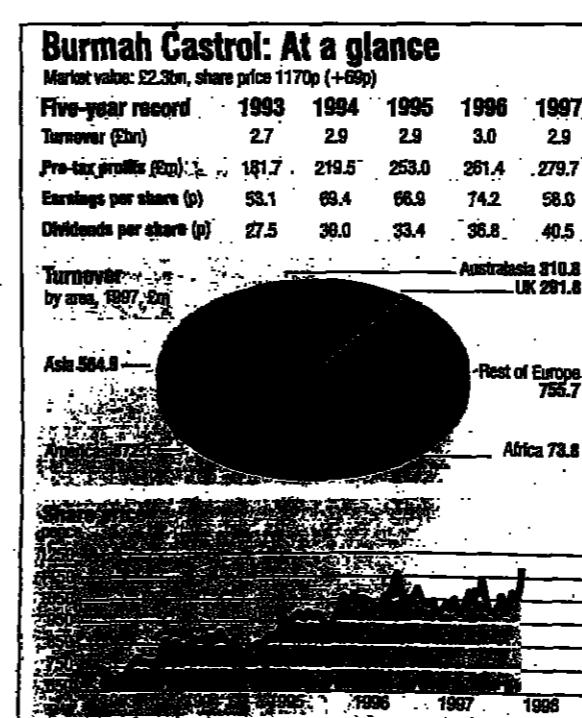
Newsquest profits rise

NEWSQUEST is a clear example of what can be done with an unflattering business when management concentrate on nothing else. When Reed Elsevier and Pearson decided to sell their regional newspaper divisions they were applauded by investors for dumping dull businesses.

So how come Newsquest is doing so well? The company, which bought the Reed and Pearson divisions with the help of US buyout specialists Kohlberg Kravis Roberts before joining the market at a share price of 250p last October, has managed to revitalise them. Full-year results for 1997, published yesterday, showed operating profits of £70m – up 43 per cent on the previous year on a pro-forma basis.

According to Jim Brown, Newsquest's chairman, that performance is down to two factors. First, the cost savings from integrating the Pearson and Reed businesses, which will be about £5m-a-year when complete. Also important is investment – Pearson had shelled out £10m on new machinery. Newsquest spent £10m on capital spending last year and is likely to splash out £15m this year.

Newsquest is also building up its online services using its local newspaper websites as a gateway for local advertising. And while Newsquest is benefiting from rising advertising revenues, it remains vulnerable to any downturn. Analysts forecast 1998 profits of £64m, placing the shares, up 3.5p to 203p yesterday, on a forward p/e ratio of 13. Good long-term value.



The strong pound knocked the stock has suffered as the football sector continues to lose fans, hardly helped by a spectacular own goal by Newcastle United directors.

Man Utd's shares slipped another 2p to 139.5p yesterday reflecting disappointment that the club failed to announce a blockbuster new sponsorship deal, choosing instead to renew its contract with Sharp for the next two years. There are also fears that a sharp rise in players' wages could dent profit progress.

Nevertheless, pre-transfer profits rose a healthy 11 per cent to £17.5m, despite a 1.5m rise in players' costs. And to bracket Man Utd with other football clubs is to ignore its real strength of its brand name.

An imminent tie-up with Par Eastern retailer, a stake in a new hotel next to Old Trafford and its new television channel hint at some of the possibilities available to the club over the next few years. Rising television income from the new BSkyB deal should offset any hike in costs. Then there is pay per view. Man Utd

من العمل



OUTLOOK
ON THE GERMAN
BID FOR ROLLS,
THE VALUE OF
BRANDS AND
THE DEPARTURE OF
SIR DESMOND
PITCHER

BERND Pischetsrieder, the chairman of BMW, has a nostalgic attachment to Britain's motoring heritage and a pair of very deep pockets. It was his obsession with the Wolseley and Riley that made him buy Rover four years ago.

Yesterday he was overcome by the spirit of Ecstasy and walked off with Rolls-Royce, the only important marque left in British hands.

The boys from Bavaria are still waiting for Mr Pischetsrieder's previous bout of nostalgia to pay off. Since 1994 BMW has invested more than £2bn in Rover only to see it run up losses of £350m and allow its market share to drift down to around 10 per cent.

It might have got within sight of a profit this year, even under German accounting conventions, but the strong pound has dashed those hopes.

Rolls-Royce is not quite the same. Unlike Rover, it is genuinely a trophy asset. Whatever else is said about British craftsmanship, the Roller remains a byword for luxury and style.

It is the most famous marque in the world. Unlike Rover, Rolls is also profitabile. Six years ago its current owners,

Vickers, sensibly allied some modern management techniques to all the walnut, leather and wool at Crewe and turned Rolls into a business that could break-even at 1400 cars a year.

Current production is bumping along at just under 2,000. But Mr Pischetsrieder has big plans to triple production at Crewe, double the workforce and stretch the Bentley brand to include a sports car.

He already has a rather dashing project to work on. The Java, which Vickers unveiled at Geneva five years ago but then ran out of money to develop, was based on a BMW5 platform and is just waiting to be taken from the drawing board.

There's the rub. Vickers just didn't have the cash to keep refuelling Rolls and in the absence of a credible British bid, there was a horrible inevitability about the business passing into foreign hands.

The pantomime horse called the Rolls-Royce Acquisition Consortium may make life uncomfortable for Sir Col in Chandler at the egm. But unless they have taken leave of their senses, Vickers shareholders will not turn down an offer that values Rolls at thirty times earnings and gives it as secure a future as it is every going to have.

Bacardi pays a rum old price

THE astronomic price fetched by Dewar's and Bombay Gin is another striking example of the power of brands. The directors of Diageo could scarcely have dreamed they would get £1.15bn for the two brands when they were forced to action them off to get the Grand Guinness merger past the competition authorities. But in stepped Bacardi, desperate to become a force to be reckoned with in the spirits market and keen not to miss out on a buying opportunity unlikely to be repeated for some time.

Diageo probably cannot believe its luck. The group played a successful game of poker with the competition authorities, offering first to sell minor brands but knowing all the time it was willing to sacrifice Dewar's. The Federal Trade Commission and the EC took the bait and left Diageo with the brands it really wanted. Dewar's may be the leading whisky in the US, but its sales have been

falling over the last few years in a tough market. Diageo has been allowed to keep international best sellers Johnnie Walker and J&B. And the loss of Bombay Sapphire will not be too hard to bear as Diageo has held on to the much bigger gin brands Gordon's and Gilbey's. No wonder Diageo's shareholders remain in party mood.

The rise and fall of King Des

SO FAREWELL then Sir Desmond Pitcher on this your last day in charge at United Utilities. Progress With Responsibility, that was your catchphrase. Bad luck for you the shareholders decided they would get more progress if someone else was made responsible.

Once you were King Des of the North West, the man who mixed water with electricity and lived to tell the tale. You invented the multi-utility and spawned a host of imitators with silly names like Hyder.

For a time all was well and the good citizens of Manchester were grateful indeed for their water rebate. But then the muttering began. No man is an island and

no share price can underperform the index for two years without questions being asked. And so, the Court of King Des was split asunder. A man called Staples came from the east (Barrow Construction actually) and wondered aloud whether a Footsie stock should be run like one man's personal fiefdom. You did for him before he could dethrone you. But the damage was done and the Army of Good Corporate Governance scented blood. Your successor comes from a land to the west, Selfield, where the water is warm all year round, at least in the sea. Sir Christopher Harding not have your vision. But then he is only there as non-exec chairman having plenty of other jobs to keep him busy.

You, however, do not. This is also your last day as chairman of the Merseyside Development Corporation, which is being closed down to make way for New Labour's regional development agencies. That just leaves the job as deputy chairman of Everton and even they look like candidates for the drop this season.

But never fear, your legacy lives on. Some day we will all live in the kingdom of King Des. One supplier, one utility bill, one regulator. In the meantime, enjoy the golf.

HSBC flies to Canary

By Les Paterson

HSBC Holdings, the banking giant which owns Midland Bank, is to move from the City to Canary Wharf at cost of £500m.

The bank is to build a 41-storey headquarters which will house 8,000 employees.

Staff at 10 HSBC buildings in the City are scheduled to move to Canary Wharf. This includes employees at HSBC's headquarters in Lower Thames Street and at Midland Bank's headquarters near Bank, as well as investment banking, treasury, insurance and asset management staff.

John Bond, group chief executive, said: "It has become increasingly evident to us that having our businesses and support departments located in different premises is far from satisfactory. We have decided that it would be in the best interests of the group if most of our London-based operations

- other than our branches - could be housed together."

Staff reaction was mixed, according to one source. Many were yesterday unaware of the decision to move.

The bank will acquire both the building and the naming rights from Canary Wharf under a 999-year lease. The building will link directly to London Underground's Jubilee Line extension.

The bank said it had considered many locations. "The agreement we have reached with Canary Wharf meets all our criteria," Mr Bond said.

The City and Canary Wharf have been engaged in a long-running battle to house London's banking community. Banks that have chosen Canary Wharf, established in the 1980s, include Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Credit Suisse First Boston and Barclays Capital. Others, such as Merrill Lynch and Deutsche Bank, have spurned Canary Wharf.

UBS 'was warned over controls'

UBS yesterday declined to comment on a report that Mathis Caballavetta, the Swiss bank's chief executive, was warned of inadequate controls on derivative trading in London five years ago. According to the *SonntagsZeitung* newspaper, Hans-Peter Bauer, formerly head of derivatives at the bank, voiced concerns to UBS top management in 1993. Earlier this year, the bank admitted losing almost £200m on equity derivative and proprietary equity trading in 1997.

Industrial claims up

INDIVIDUAL claims to industrial tribunals have reached a record high, according to the conciliation service Acas. Complaints have increased for the 10th year in succession. Acas received nearly 107,000 claims on industrial rights issues, two out of five involving unfair dismissal - 6.5 per cent up on 1996.

MFI chief moves

MFI, the troubled furniture retailer, has replaced the head of its retail business in an attempt to improve performance. John O'Connell is giving up his responsibilities as retail director to take control of the merchandising operations. He will remain in the main board. Matthew Ingle, head of MFI's Howden Joinery division, has been promoted to retail director but will not be on the main board.

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Stand out from the crowd with a National Training Award.

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Andover Systems (F)	58.91m (53.50m)	11.78m (7.50m)	50.10 (33.80)	15.00 (10.00)
Ascent Holdings (F)	191.0m (88.1m)	30.2m (5.5m)	30.5p (10.5p)	0.0p (-)
Autoglass (F)	182.8m (180.4m)	197.4m (44.8m)	107.0p (19.39)	7.00 (8.50)
BMW (F)	3.75m (3.34m)	0.38m (0.16m)	2.18p (1.35p)	0.50 (0.31p)
BNi Circle (F)	2.315m (2.160m)	35.3m (204.5m)	29.0p (23.5p)	*14.5p (13.2p)
Bluebeam Preparations (F) (-)	0.44m (0.60m)	1.01p (0.76p)	1.20	1.20
Bon (Stewart) (F)	25.00m (22.4m)	-3.4m (1.88)	-2.65p (0.03p)	all (1.70)
Brayton Land Estates (F) (2.25m)	0.404m (0.16m)	0.43p (0.19p)	all (-)	
Brightwater (F)	2.48m (1.82m)	0.773m (0.12m)	0.05p (0.07p)	all (-)
Brink's Hotel (F)	9.00m (9.25m)	0.382m (0.54m)	2.75p (3.07p)	1.50 (1.80)
Britex (F)	81.54m (72.41m)	5.04m (4.84m)	24.1p (22.4p)	8.50 (7.70)
Friendly Hotels (F)	60.83m (45.15m)	7.94m (4.47m)	25.5p (10.7p)	5.50 (5.70)
Brinsford (F)	48.72m (43.71m)	2.95m (1.21m)	51.8p (16.4p)	8.50 (4.00)
London & Manchester (F) (-)	1.95m (1.70m)	2.40 (2.25p)	0.50 (0.17p)	
London & Manchester (F) (+)	44.8m (51.1m)	24.3p (57.0p)	24.24p (-)	
Malton Group (F)	63.21m (55.10m)	10.1m (5.85m)	17.7p (12.0p)	4.00 (-)
Manchester United (F)	51.8m (50.1m)	14.5m (19.6m)	4.6p (4.8p)	0.50p (0.475p)
Miller Ashworth (F)	62.30m (78.56m)	3.72m (2.9m)	12.0p (11.25p)	5.00 (-)
Monks Foods (F)	2.65m (1.16m)	-0.032m (0.03m)	-0.02p (0.02p)	all (-)
Prinsenight (F)	12.95m (11.45m)	0.828m (0.488m)	10.27p (5.51p)	0.50 (-)
Prudential Holdings (F)	185.0m (162.2m)	15.01m (13.50m)	17.7p (14.1p)	0.50 (0.25p)
Reed Hire (F)	21.02m (20.87m)	7.28m (1.47m)	18.2p (4.25p)	2.00 (2.00)
TAB Stores (F)	540.1m (500.2m)	20.01m (17.72m)	19.7p (12.00p)	0.50 (7.75p)
Young & Rubicam (F)	5.24m (5.08m)	-0.28m (0.08m)	-1.0p (0.05p)	all (1.25p)
Water TV (F)	34.77m (34.77m)	8.272m (8.017m)	10.50p (8.00p)	5.50p (5.10p)
(F) - Final (I) - Interim				

*Dividend to be paid on a FD

Players should not expect to make a full-time living out of the game



ALAN
WATKINS
ON
RUGBY

ALL the rugby followers I meet are fed up with the continuing wrangle – more exactly, the blazing row – between Cliff Brindle of the Rugby Football Union and assorted Mr Monkeys from the leading clubs. The fans think that everything can be sorted out with a little give and take and a bit of goodwill on both sides.

This, alas, is the trouble. Goodwill is the commodity that is distinctly short supply. One might as well ask for more of it among Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims or between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Or, as a leading article in the old *Manchester Guardian* once put it: "It is greatly to be hoped that persons of goodwill and

moderation will come together, and wiser counsels yet prevail."

My own view is that things have gone too far, and that some structure on the lines of the Football Association and Football League will have to be set up.

I also believe that, where

there is acute controversy about money, and to whom it properly belongs, the only people who can resolve matters are judges. That, after all, is their job. I have come to this conclusion reluctantly, because the only people who are guaranteed to benefit from litigation are the lawyers.

However, that a judge may know nothing about the game does not bother me in the least. Instead of "Who is Gazz?" he may ask: "Who is this Mr Dallaglio?" Is he Italian, by any

chance?" This does not matter. All a judge needs to know is that the captain of England, who also happens to be captain of his club, Wasps, has entered into a separate contract with the RFU – assuming, for the moment, that Lawrence Dallaglio has indeed entered into such an agreement.

To pronounce on questions of this nature no judge needs to have a knowledge of rugby, still less of what is called "ordinary life" – which is assumed to consist largely of knowing about pop music and current films.

Nevertheless, the instinct that these troublesome matters should, as far as possible, be kept away from the gentlemen in wigs is a sound one. If a conflict can be resolved, it is always better to resolve it by agreement.

The fundamental difficulty is that rugby cannot survive in its present professional form without huge injections of cash from television. It is doubtful whether it can survive wholly professionally even with these subsidies. The nearest equivalent is county cricket, which likewise maintains a professional structure that is not justified by the level of public support.

Last Saturday, for instance, Wasps v Sale at Loftus Road drew an embarrassingly small crowd of 3,500. That number would have fitted, just about, into the club's old ground at Sudbury.

Quite apart from this consideration, I doubt whether rugby should be played at the Queen's Park Rangers ground

at all. There are laws about the size of the playing area, less flexible than those for football; and Loftus Road is simply too small.

The question of home advantage is something else. Wasps v Sale at a neutral ground would probably have resulted in an even lower attendance. But in principle cup semi-finals should surely be held at such grounds.

The 9,000 at Franklin's Gardens for, on the afternoon, the better game of Northampton v Saracens was not much to shout about either. The only English clubs I can think of that would draw five-figure crowds at home are Leicester and Bath. In France, by contrast, the cup semi-finals (played on neutral

grounds, on the Saturday and Sunday) between them draw a crowd in excess of 30,000.

I was always in favour both of professionalism and of full interchangeability between union and league. But by "professionalism" I meant that players should be paid for their trouble, their effort and the disruption of their social life – not that they should expect to

make a full-time living out of the game all the same.

This does not mean I support Brindle and Fran Cotton in their attempt to regionalise rugby: far from it. London v North-west at Loftus Road would have been lucky to draw 1,500.

The short-term palliative is

a rationalisation of the fixture list, which will mean that the preliminary European matches and, maybe, more matches generally will have to be played in mid-week. But the conflict may have gone too far for this remedy to work on its own.

Mighty mouth Rios grows in stature

JOHN ROBERTS, in Key Biscayne, Florida, on Latin America's brattish new tennis No 1

Dying?", described Rios as the "Most Hated Man in Tennis". The article did not provoke a protest petition from the rest of the media, and Rios himself dismissed it with a shake of his ponytail as par for the course. "I think this guy that wrote the article knew what he was going to write before the interview," he said. "That is fine. I don't care what he wrote."

It must be emphasised that

Hennman on the rise

Tim Hennman is up to No 15 in the latest world rankings following his performance in reaching the semi-finals of the Lipton's Championship in Key Biscayne last week.

For many tennis followers, Agassi's shortcomings have been overlooked because of his charisma and mischievous charm. Rios seems sincere when he says he does not care what people think about him.

Lindsay Davenport, the tall

American who is No 2 behind

Martina Hingis in the women's

game, ventured the view that

being No 1 without having won

a Grand Slam title was not such

a big deal. Rios barely used a

backswing in returning the shot.

"Winning a Grand Slam is easy for girls," he said. "They should be No 1 really easy."

Agassi, while acknowledging

that Rios has risen on merit,

declared: "He'll have to win

a Slam this year to be No 1 in

the players' eyes and to be

No 1 in his own eyes."

Rios pointed out that the

tour is played "over a lot of

tournaments, not only Grand

Slams" and emphasised that he

had been "playing all year, trying to improve my ranking".

Tim Hennman, the only player

to take a set off Rios last

week, sides with the Chilean.

"Ranking points don't lie,"

the British No 2 said. "You've got

to earn every single one of

them. Rios has accumulated the

most in the last 12 months. His

results speak for themselves. I

definitely think he deserves it."



Lemon Drop Kid: Marcelo Rios seems unconcerned that he has yet to win a Grand Slam

Photograph: AFP

It is not that Rios is inclined to brag about his status. "Maybe in this moment I am playing better than anyone, but I don't think the other players have no chance to beat me," he said.

"I don't think of myself as being on another level. I don't think like that. I always say that even if you're No 1, you're not really there. You can lose. Everyone has a chance to beat me."

Rios's natural talent has ma-

tured under the guidance of Larry Stefanki, who regards success in the Grand Slams as a priority ("when it's all over, that's what they remember").

Stefanki advised McEnroe during the turbulent one later years on the regular circuit. "Johnny was, quote unquote, difficult. People said if I could last with McEnroe, I could handle Marcelo," Stefanki told the *Miami Herald*. "We've had

our moments, but Marcelo is getting better. He's just turning into a man."

"He's not going to be garrulous in the locker-room or act like Bill Clinton. He's very cut and dried. That's why we're still together. Coming from South America and getting thrown into the worldwide spectrum can be intimidating."

When first asked to take a look at the 5ft 9in Rios by the

player's agent, Stefanki's immediate reaction was, "this kid is so striking small." He soon came to see larger qualities when Rios took on the game's big servers. "He loves taking on that challenge," he said. "He's driven inside. People don't see it. There are a lot of layers, and underneath, it burns."

And he does make a point of smiling in public at least once a month.

Westwood entranced by America

Golf

By Andy Farrell
in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida

IT WAS Phil Mickelson at the Ryder Cup who pointed out that it was probably Nick Faldo who chose to partner Lee Westwood and not the other way round. "The great thing was that he did what he was told," Faldo said.

"If I said 'hit a three-wood down the fairway' he would do it, if I said 'put it on the green' he would do it and if I said 'knock in the putt' he would do that too," Faldo added. "He's doing all right."

Westwood, only 24, keeps taking strides only marginally smaller than those of a tiger. The latest was his fifth place finish in the US Players' Championship here at Sawgrass on Sunday.

It was his debut at the TPC and three of the four players who finished above him were Open champions in Justin Leonard, Tom Lehman and Mark Calcavecchia. A final-round 69 left Westwood four behind Leonard, the most recent winner at Royal Troon.

Faldo could be seeing a lot

more of America in the future. After only two events this year Westwood has won \$183,500 (£113,270) and is only \$16,500 (£10,000) away from earning the right to join the US Tour and gain unlimited invitations for

Safe in the knowledge he will qualify for a card next year, Westwood may not join the US Tour for this season and stick to his planned 13 or 14 events. That would prevent a potentially embarrassing clash for, at his present rate, he may qualify for the elite 30-man, \$4m Tour Championship, which is scheduled opposite the Volvo Masters, where he is the defending champion.

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Faldo could be seeing a lot

Hurst keeps Dobson at bay

PAT HURST claimed her first major championship title on Sunday, having never lost the lead on her way to victory in the Nabisco Dinah Shore in Rancho Mirage, California.

Hurst, the 28-year-old former United States Amateur and Collegiate champion, shot a final-round one-under-par 71 to finish with a seven-under

score of 281, one stroke better than Britain's Helen Dobson, whose final-round 67 was the lowest of the day. It gave Dobson only the third top-10 finish of her six-year LPGA career.

Another Briton, Laura Davies, produced a score of 68 to finish at five under, tied for third place with Sweden's Helen Alfredsson, who shot a 70.

Scores, Digest, page 27

Canon
personal
copiers

Knight e:
ultimate

Bristol

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewitt

BRIAN ANTHONY playing days as a defender of the Australian system, where the leading five clubs play off against each other, leading to a Grand Final.

Matthew Elliott, the coach

of the defending champions,

who start their defence against

the newcomers of Huddersfield this Friday night, welcome

the change.

"We are really looking forward to it at Bradford," he said. "The objective is to make the top five and then it is a new competition. It means that your most important match of the season is your last one."

For Hull, on the other hand,

their most important match this season could be their first.

Lindsay was able to announce that the crisis, which saw their chairman, David Lloyd, walk out last week, was over and that the Sharks were not about to sink.

The club's captain, Alan Hume, repeated the message

that all would be well, both for

the opening fixture at Sheffield on Sunday and beyond.

"The players have had a meeting to clarify a few things and we are 100 per cent behind David Lloyd," he said. "A lot of people have panicked over nothing and there was never any problem as far as the players were concerned."

"It makes no difference to us whether our contracts are held by the club or by David Lloyd. It will be business as usual and our spectators – who are the most important people in all this – won't notice any difference either."

The ambition for the season generally, however, is that the public should notice a difference. The competition will be more heavily promoted than ever and Sky is to put extra technical resources into the televising of the sport.

Salford will impose a life ban on the spectator who attacked the referee, Stuart Cummings, at the end of their Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final defeat by Sheffield on Saturday.

The club says that if the man taken into custody after the incident and expected to be charged is shown to be one of their followers, he will never be allowed into The Willows again.

Lindsay has described the claim of a delegation from the Australian Rugby League that they are still owed \$400,000 from the 1995 World Cup, for which he was director, as "absurd".

Los Angeles Marathon
21st March 1998
From 2.15pm
10k 2.15pm
5k 2.30pm
3k 2.45pm
10k 2.55pm
5k 3.00pm
3k 3.15pm

Knight eager for ultimate test

ONE of the dangers for the ambitious cricketer, now that one-day and Test cricket are seen as entirely different games, is that success at one tends to mark you out as a distinct species, rather than as a sub-species able to survive in both environments.

Specialisation (the term exists for botanists as well as cricket coaches) is a problem with which Nick Knight, last Sunday's man of the match, is only too recently aware. Noticing his third one-day century, an innings that helped England to their eighth one-day victory in a row, Knight is also keen to add to his 11 Test caps, but feels one-day cricket is no longer the stepping stone it perhaps was in the past.

First one-day international scoreboard

West Indies won toss		England	
WV Knight run out	10	8 C Lara run out	10
177 11, 100 balls, 13 fours, 4 sixes	122	740 mins, 100 balls, 15 fours, 3 sixes	125
G A Hick not out	122	C J Hogg not out	45
14 11, 100 balls, 9 fours	75	P J Simmons not out	34
G A Hick 11, 100 balls	10	S Chanderpaul c Knight b Gooch	8
49 mins, 39 balls, 1 six	21	D C Wharf c Knight b Gooch	1
G F Thorpe b Simmons	7	11 R Murray c Stewart b Headley	1
13 11, 100 balls, not out	4	RJ Lewis c Stewart to Headley	27
34 mins, 14 balls, 2 fours	15	15 11, 100 balls, 3 fours	22
F A Pave c A Hollioake b Fleming	24	19 11, 100 balls, 2 fours	22
M A Stewart b Simmons	20	20 11, 100 balls, 1 four, 1 six	22
17 mins, 14 balls, 1 four, 1 six	22	C E Ambrose not out	3
10 mins, 12 balls, 2 fours, 1 six	22	C A J Hogg not out	0
Extras (bowls)	4	C A J Hogg to Gooch	0
Total (for 5, 205, 50 overs)	226	Extras (bowls)	0
Fall: 1-1 (Stewart) 2-222 (pick) 3-228 (Knight) 4-249 (Thorpe) 5-227 (Saham)	277	Total (214 mins, 48.5 overs)	277
Did not bat: B C Bishen, R D B Croft, D R Brown, D W Hogg		Fall: 1-23 (Saham) 2-227 (Larsen) 3-115 (Lewis) 4-115 (Lewis) 5-115 (Lewis) 6-115 (Lewis) 7-115 (Lewis) 8-115 (Lewis) 9-115 (Lewis) 10-115 (Lewis) 11-115 (Lewis) 12-115 (Lewis) 13-115 (Lewis) 14-115 (Lewis) 15-115 (Lewis) 16-115 (Lewis) 17-115 (Lewis) 18-115 (Lewis) 19-115 (Lewis) 20-115 (Lewis) 21-115 (Lewis) 22-115 (Lewis) 23-115 (Lewis) 24-115 (Lewis) 25-115 (Lewis) 26-115 (Lewis) 27-115 (Lewis) 28-115 (Lewis) 29-115 (Lewis) 30-115 (Lewis) 31-115 (Lewis) 32-115 (Lewis) 33-115 (Lewis) 34-115 (Lewis) 35-115 (Lewis) 36-115 (Lewis) 37-115 (Lewis) 38-115 (Lewis) 39-115 (Lewis) 40-115 (Lewis) 41-115 (Lewis) 42-115 (Lewis) 43-115 (Lewis) 44-115 (Lewis) 45-115 (Lewis) 46-115 (Lewis) 47-115 (Lewis) 48-115 (Lewis) 49-115 (Lewis) 50-115 (Lewis) 51-115 (Lewis) 52-115 (Lewis) 53-115 (Lewis) 54-115 (Lewis) 55-115 (Lewis) 56-115 (Lewis) 57-115 (Lewis) 58-115 (Lewis) 59-115 (Lewis) 60-115 (Lewis) 61-115 (Lewis) 62-115 (Lewis) 63-115 (Lewis) 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Fairer deal promised for Euro 2000

Exclusive

By Nick Harris

THE ORGANISERS of the next European Championship finals in two years' time are pledging to make tickets much more freely available to ordinary supporters.

Forty per cent of the tickets for *Euro 2000*, which will be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium, are likely to go on sale across Europe this autumn on a first-come first-served basis, with many likely to be sold via the Internet.

A further 25 per cent would

be made available to fans of each competing team per game, with nearly all sales on a tickets-only basis rather than as part of travel packages. The remaining 10 per cent of tickets for the tournament, which will be played in stadiums with capacities ranging from 30,000 to 50,000, will go to sponsors.

The moves are being considered by Uefa, European football's governing body, and the organising committee for the 16-nation tournament in direct response to the criticisms of ticket sales for this summer's World Cup in France.

More than 60 per cent of tickets for *France 98* have been

allocated only to the French – which the European Commission says is in contravention of European law – and many competing countries are unhappy with their small allocations of tickets.

The qualifying competition for *Euro 2000* begins this summer and will end in the autumn of 1999, when the draw for the finals will be made. However, the dates and venues for finals matches will be announced this autumn.

Although it is expected that many of the freely available 40 per cent of tickets will be bought by fans in the host countries, there will no specific

allocation in favour of Belgian and Dutch fans.

For *France 98*, more than 60 per cent of tickets have been reserved for French citizens, 16 per cent for competing sides, 14.2 per cent to sponsors and over five per cent to tour operators.

British fans, tempted by the close proximity of the *Euro 2000* venues, are likely to buy tickets before the finalists are confirmed, knowing they will still be guaranteed a chance to watch Europe's largest football tournament even if their side is not playing in games they purchase tickets for.

Despite the European Commission's legal challenge to the

complex procedure, Ernie Walker, the chairman of the *Euro 2000* ticketing committee, said of the ticket plan: "He added that he is fully aware of the problems encountered by the World Cup's French Organising Committee (CFO), which is trying to please fans (who want access to tickets), governments (who want security guarantees), and the European Commission (which demands that tickets be sold uniformly within Europe). The CFO has also had to follow guidelines laid down by Fifa, football's world governing body.

Walker said: "We'll address

[the issue of equal access to

tickets for *Euro 2000*] rather

than come up with the same

kind of situation that we see

now."

The *Euro 2000* organisers will also make as many tickets

as possible available directly to fans at face value, without being expensively tied to organised packages.

For *France 98*, there is no chance that those already sold will be recalled for fairer distribution. At best, it's expected that the CFO will release a small amount of extra

tickets, estimated at a few hundred per team for the group stage games, for general sale in the next two weeks.

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No date has yet been confirmed for when *Euro 2000* tickets will be put on sale, but it is expected that full details of all arrangements, and the programme for *Euro 2000* games, will be announced this autumn.

Uefa prefers not to have

tickets linked to travel packages at all," said Walker. "Our general approach would be we

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He added that Uefa would not directly give control of any tickets to travel agents. Only when the national federations choose to market their tickets through agents will a profit-making middle-man be used – but Uefa expects most national federations will choose to sell most tickets directly to fans at face value.

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